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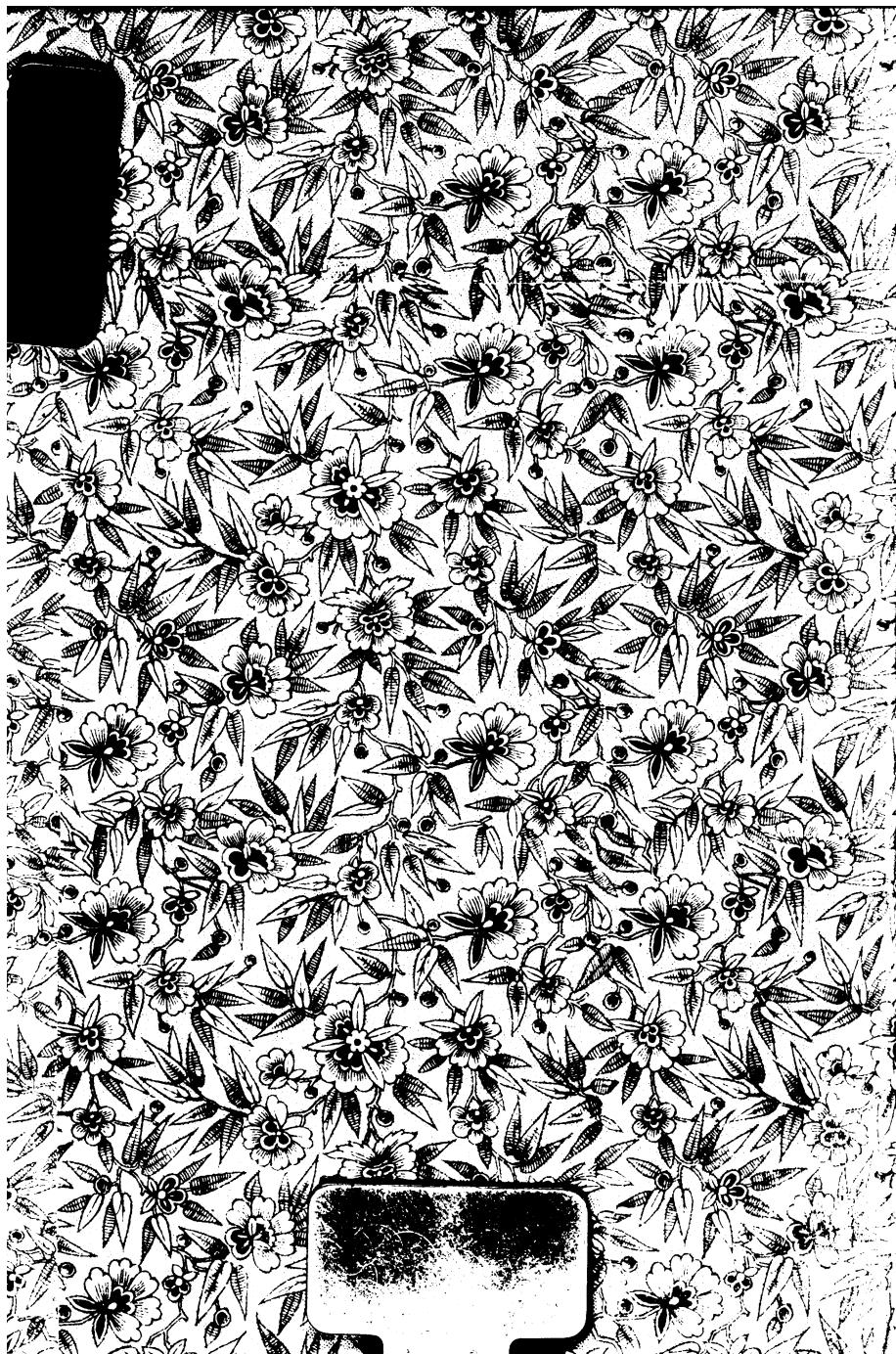
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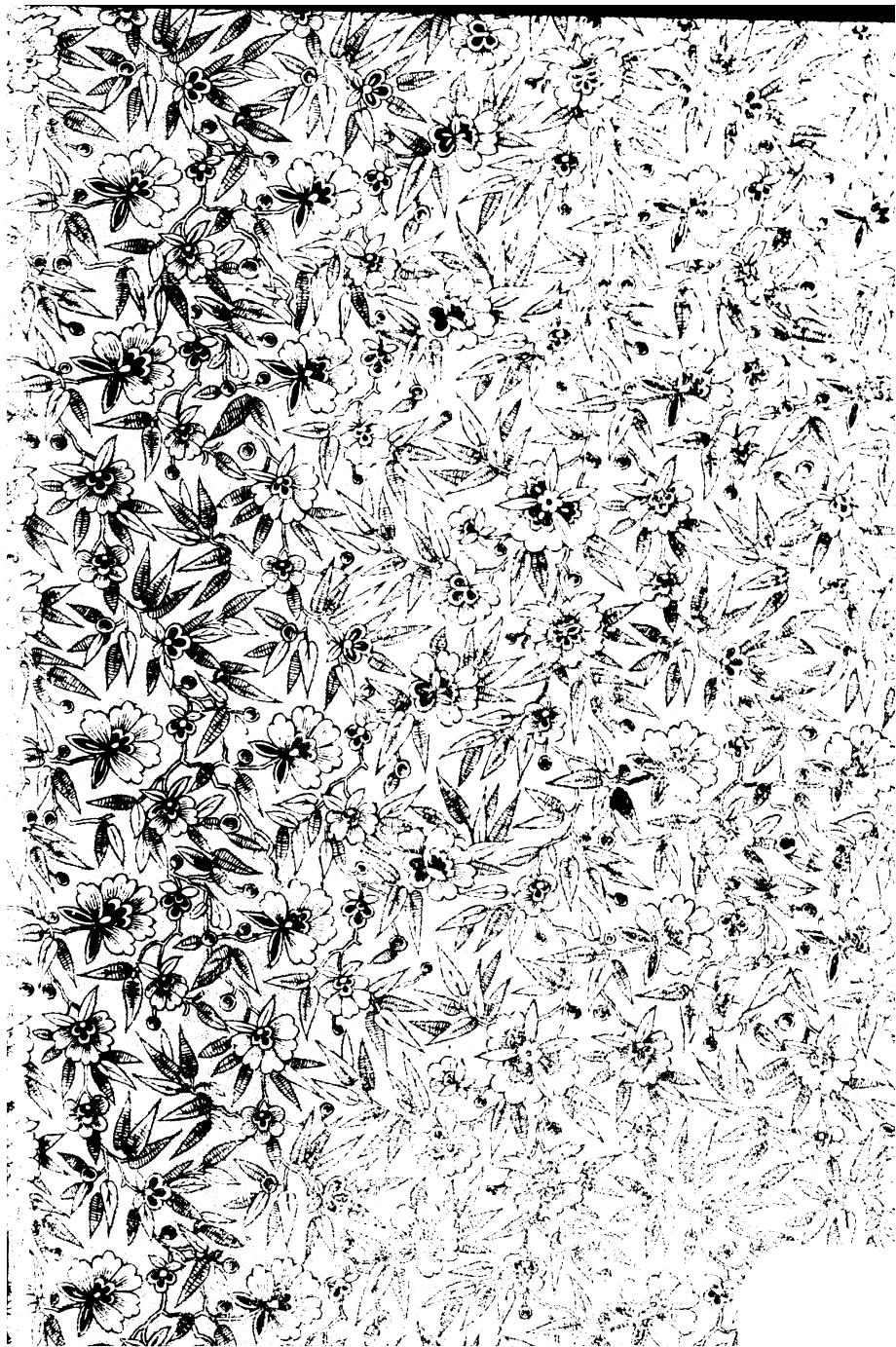
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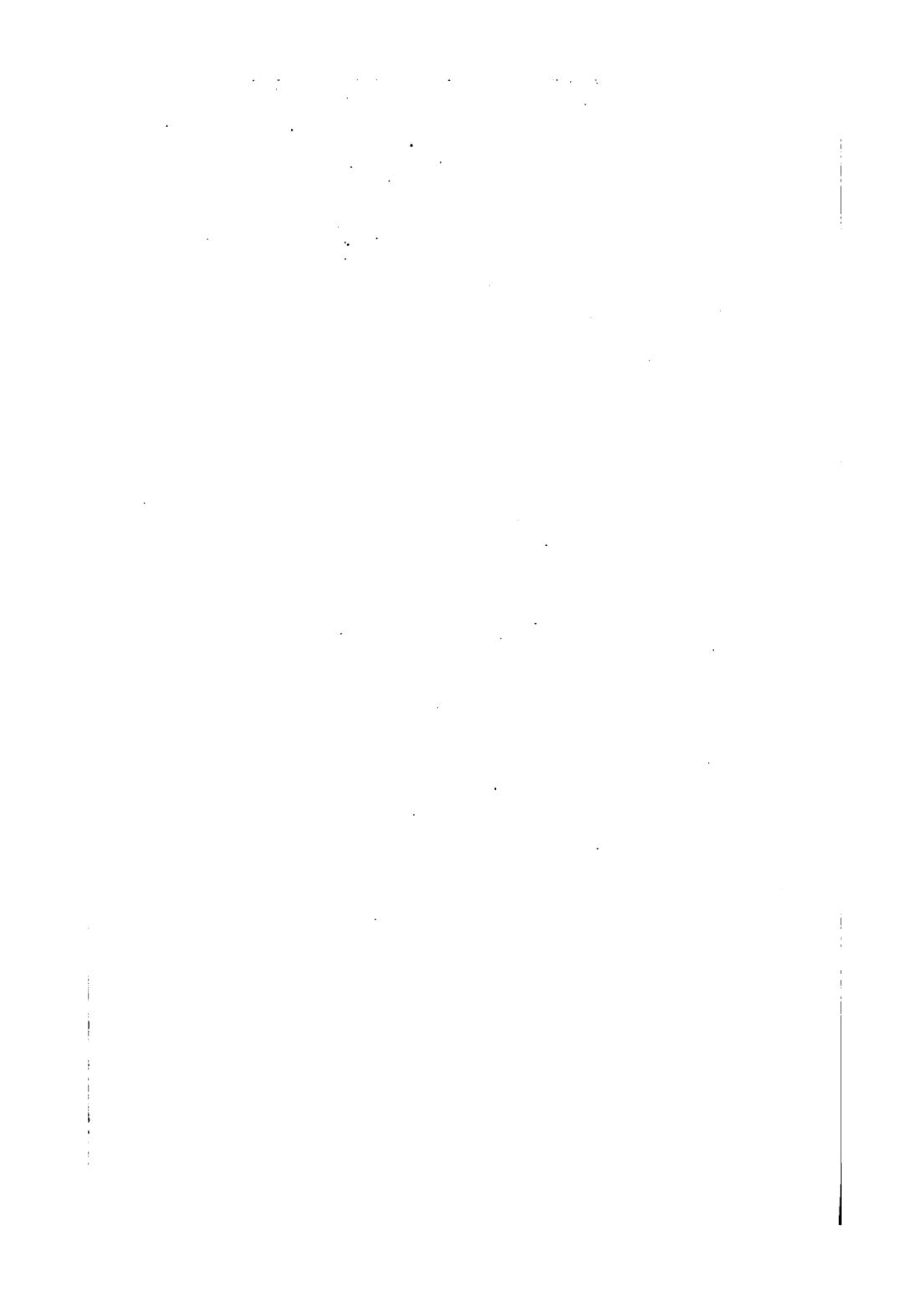
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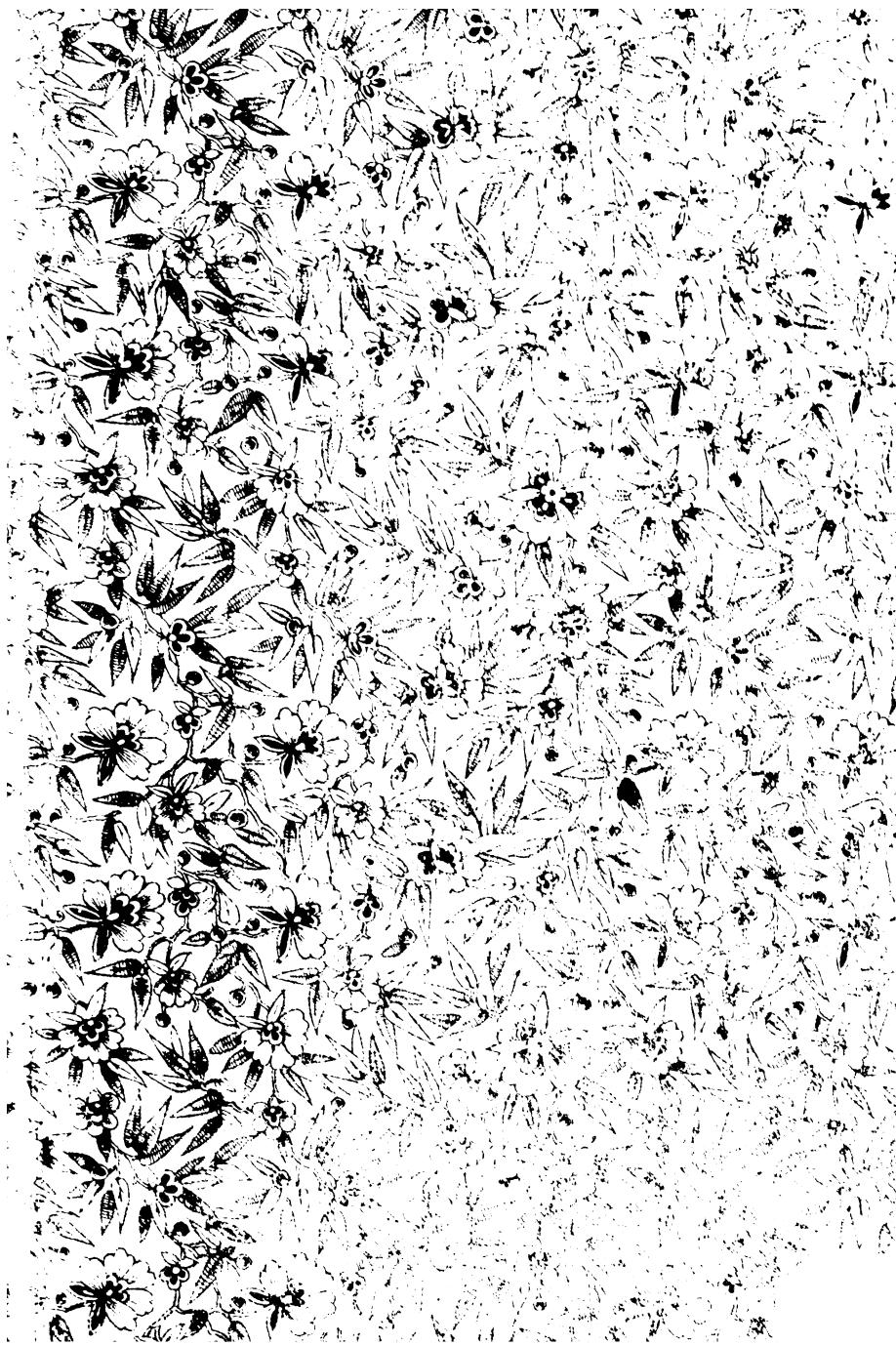
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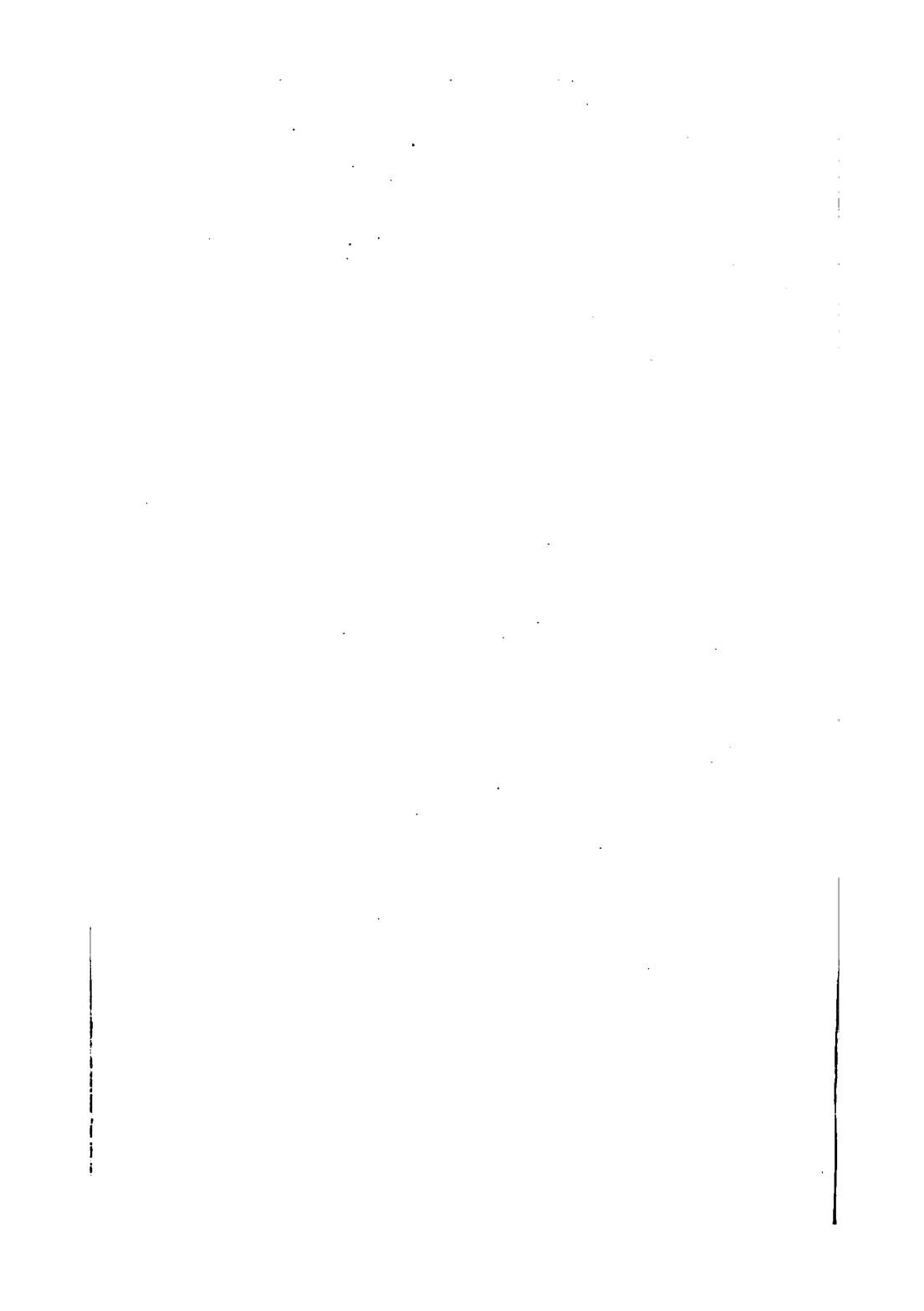






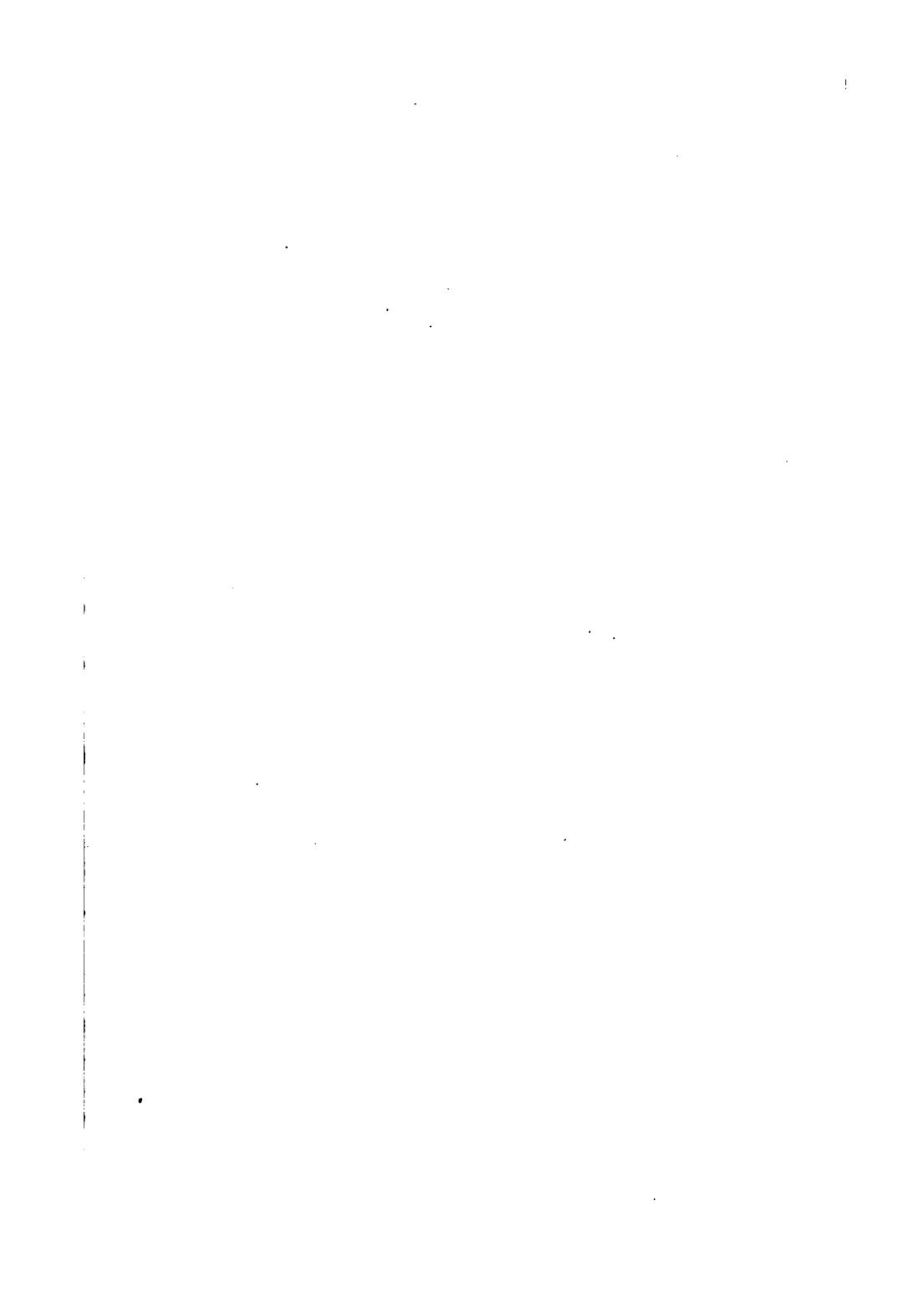






III.

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BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND  
THE NORTHERN SEA.

“ Birds! we but repeat on you  
What amongst ourselves we do.  
Somewhat more or somewhat less,  
‘Tis the same unskillfulness.  
What you feel escapes our ken—  
Know we more our fellow-men ?  
Human suffering at our side,  
Ah, like yours is undescribed !  
Human longings, human fears,  
Mise our eyes and mise our ears ;  
Little helping, wounding much,  
Dull of heart and hard of touch,  
Brother man’s despairing sign,  
Who may trust us to divine ? ”

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

# BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND THE NORTHERN SEA.

BY

MARY LINSKILL,  
(“STEPHEN YORKE”)

AUTHOR OF “TALES OF THE NORTH RIDING,” “CLEVEDEN,” ETC.

*IN THREE VOLUMES.*

VOL. III.

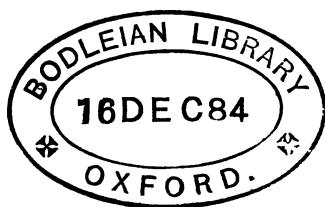


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## BETWEEN THE HEATHER AND THE NORTHERN SEA.

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W

### CHAPTER I.

“TURN THY WILD WHEEL THRO’ SUNSHINE,  
STORM, AND CLOUD.”

“Round me too the night  
In ever-nearing circle weaves her shade.  
I see her veil draw soft across the day,  
I feel her slowly chilling breath invade  
The cheeks grown thin, the brown hair sprent with  
grey;

I feel her finger light  
Laid pausefully upon life’s headlong train;—  
The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,  
The heart less bounding at emotion new,  
And hope, once crush’d, less quick to spring again.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

WHEN Genevieve came down from her little room under the thatch on the morning of the concert-day her eyes were alight with a new

anticipation. It was not the evening's success for which she was so eager, but the morning's pleasure. There was a hoar frost upon the land.

A cup of tea, some dry toast was waiting. "They've only looked at the tray," Keturah said to herself a few minutes later, when she saw her master and mistress going out arm-in-arm, stepping from a cottage door into a wide, still realm of perfect and unearthly-seeming beauty. The trees stood as if moved to a conscious calm by their own exceeding loveliness; every bough, every twig, made you feel as if you had never in your lifetime noticed the perfectness of form and curve displayed by a branching tree. The rime was everywhere, on the tiniest point of the tiniest briar-leaf; and the undertones of colour struck through the thin diamond encrustation with an altogether new and delicate tenderness of tint and tone.

They went down to the studio by the grassy orchard ways, brushing sparkling crystals from the undergrowth at every step. Genevieve's white pigeons were wheeling up against the blue-grey mono-

tone of the sky. All else was motionless. The studio was full of a steady and admirable light for painting. It had to be concentrated a little on the spot where the easel stood with the “Sir Galahad” upon it. It was many weeks since Bartholomew had touched the fine spiritual-looking head before him. He was a little surprised by it; more than a little glad. Yet it seemed like another man’s work—something with which he had no right to trifle.

Genevieve watched his face as he stood looking into the soft, blue, upturned eyes on the canvas. Her hand was still within her father’s arm; when she saw that he was glad she let her cheek rest affectionately upon his shoulder.

“The morning rime is good,” she said with an apparent irrelevance.

“All beauty is good,” replied the artist. “I wonder when man will surprise the last secret of beauty. We are far from it yet—the best of us.”

“But it is something to be seeking.”

“Yes; it is something. It is much to the man who has found the right clue. Till now

I have been wandering on without a clue.  
Yet even in wandering I trust I did what it  
was given to me to do."

Genevieve stood silent a moment; her heart was beating a little, as if she herself was on the verge of discovery of some larger law. . . . Then there came a sound into the silence.

"There—run, dear—that is the postman's horn," said Bartholomew, with a sudden greyness passing across his face.

Genevieve came back in a minute or two smiling, almost breathless, holding a letter aloft.

"Here is the Richmond crest!" she said. "A cross patonce, azure, between four étoiles; and the Richmond motto—'*Fides præstantior auro.*' Let me be mercenary, and hope that the Richmond cheque is equally imposing!"

Bartholomew's hand trembled in a very evident manner as he took the note. There was no responsive smile on his grey face; no sign of relief. It was characteristic of him that he looked about for a paper-knife, and cut the envelope with an unusual deliberateness. He read the note silently. Then he sat

down, not lifting his eyes to his daughter's face.

“Don't say that the cheque is not there, father!” Genevieve said, coming round to where he sat, and stroking his thin grey hair in a tender, loving way.

“Read the note, little one,” the father said, handing it to her. It was a very brief note. If it were cruel, it was not elaborate cruelty. If it were hard and unseeing, the hardness was not prolonged. If it struck like a blow, the blow was quickly dealt.

“*I have received your letter,*” Mr. Richmond wrote. “*The pictures are very good, but the price is more than I expected. Will you take them back? I think you would be able to dispose of them.*”

Genevieve put her arm round her father's neck, and drew his face to hers and kissed him.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

The worst of the sickening shock was over when they began to speak of it.

“You will have noticed that Mr. Richmond has not mentioned his sister's name,” Bartholomew said.

“Yes,” replied Genevieve; “and I also remember that Miss Richmond did not allude to the pictures that day when she met Mr. Kirkoswald here. I do not think that she has alluded to them at all.”

“What inference do you draw?”

“That there is not perfect confidence in this matter between the brother and sister.”

“So I think; and so I fear.”

“You fear?”

“Yes. Miss Richmond’s pride alone would have saved us such a stroke as this.”

In writing to Cecil Richmond Bartholomew had, of course, mentioned the price of the pictures. The view of Yarrell Croft was to be fifty guineas, the garden-scene seventy.

“But it is so little!” Genevieve had said. “You would have put double that price upon them if you had sent them to London.”

This was true; and the knowledge that it was true did much to relieve the keenness of the overwhelming blow that had fallen; and it did something toward raising a suspicion of complications underneath the affair that neither Noel Bartholomew nor his daughter might do more than suspect. Yet, as was

natural, the man wearied himself with trying to arrive at some solution of this strange turn of events. He was altogether weary and heart-sick.

“I am quite incapable of discerning what it will be wisest to do now,” he said. “I have never before had to contend with circumstances like this, with a nature like this. I am baffled utterly.”

In the end he wrote again to Mr. Richmond, simply explaining that he could not expect to find a purchaser for pictures that were so entirely of the nature of portraiture. Few men would care to buy a matter-of-fact representation of another man’s house, another man’s grounds. He was sorry to seem disengaging, but he could not do this thing that was asked of him. Then, with a painful effort, he added, “My present circumstances do not permit of it. And as to reducing the price of the pictures, that would be virtually to admit that I had valued them too highly at first. You are probably aware how far this is from being the fact.”

That was all. The letter was sent to the post, and then again Bartholomew and his

daughter set themselves to wait with patience. A new quietness, a new yieldingness seemed to have come down upon the poor fate-torn artist. When the evening came he consented, without hesitation, to go down with his daughter to the music-room.

“ I would go if it were only as a matter of gratitude, dear,” he said, speaking as lightly and gaily as he might do. “ Think of it—if I had been alone through all this! What should I have done ? ”

“ I don’t know what *you* would have done,” replied Genevieve, stroking the thin nervous hand she held, and speaking with a responsive gaiety ; “ I don’t know what you would have done, since you are a man. A woman would have opened her piano, and would have sung ‘ Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor hate.’ ”

“ And all the while her heart would have been breaking.”

“ Sir Walter Scott says that ‘ a woman’s heart takes a long time o’ breaking.’ ”

“ So he does ; but he is careful to make the addition, ‘ That’s according to the stuff they’re made o’, sir.’ ”

"Then since mine is made of very strong stuff, I will go and dress. . . . I shall be ready in ten minntes, my father."

\* \* \* \* \*

The wreaths were all in their places—ivy for friendship, laurel for ambition, with here and there a glowing red chrysanthemum, blushing because it must always say, "I love." There was some dark yew there also, and a spray or two of cypress. The soft lamplight had been streaming down some time when Noel Bartholomew and his daughter went into the music-room. Mrs. Caton was arranging the girls on the platform. She had taken the children under her especial protection, and had provided each little girl with a warm dark-red frock for the winter concert-evenings; whereupon Mrs. Damer had said that Mrs. Caton was growing quite sensible; and Miss Standen had added that she hoped sensibleness was like charity, and began at home.

These small amenities of speech in nowise interfered with the amenity of the general effect of things. Two or three more young ladies had been invited, who could sing pretty

songs and wear pretty dresses. One of them looked like a tall straight daffodil, with its petals arranged as multitudinous frills. A little stout lady beside her had the appearance of a toilet pincushion, with her deep white flounce and underskirt of pale pink. Mrs. Caton had besought everybody to look up their old evening dresses, and to put them on when they came to sing. She was quite sure the fisher-folk of Soulsgrif Bight would take it as a compliment. A belief in pleasing and effective colour was one of the chief articles of her social creed. It was an insult to your neighbourhood to wear a gown that the eye could not rest upon with pleasure, or soothing, or satisfaction. And Mrs. Caton was a consistent woman.

Genevieve went smiling up to the platform in her white serge dress. She had a double band of plain black velvet round her head, confining her yellow rippling hair after the manner seen on Greek coins. Mr. Severne had offered her his arm, and he went with her across the back of the platform to where George Kirkoswald stood talking to Wilfrid Stuart about some violin-music. George did

not know that Genevieve had come. He was intending to walk a little way up the Bank when this last arrangement was made; and now here was a clear penetrating voice close beside him, saying, with a little quiver in it, "How do you do, Mr. Kirkoswald?"

He started visibly as he turned. "I have only been home two hours," he said, taking Genevieve's hand in his for a moment. He said the words as if he meant them for an apology; but none was needed now that he was there, looking into her eyes alone, trying to read at a glance the history of the days. There was nothing that was difficult of interpretation. Love can always be read, and faith, and joy—these being simple things and good. It is sorrow that is complex, and mean motive, and evil will.

The concert began with a trio, Mrs. Caton and Miss Damer at the piano, while Wilfrid Stuart played the violin. It was some music of Donizetti's—the overture to *Lucia di Lammermoor*—and it was being played very effectively, so the people thought who were listening, and who were capable of judging. They were not all listening. Genevieve was

sitting on a chair, half hidden by the piano, thinking what a curious meeting it had been, meeting hands and meeting glances on a raised platform, with pink lights shining down, and green wreaths whispering fidelity. Agatha Damer was sitting on the other side of her, in a dress of willow-green embroidered with white silk daisies. George Kirkoswald stood behind, between the two chairs, carried away on the quivering notes of the violin, lifted into realms of resolute hoping, determined defying. Quite unknown to himself his hand had grasped the back of Genevieve's chair—he was grasping it as if he had caught and conquered his life's greatest enemy, overcome his last and most invincible difficulty.

The moment of imagined victory is often the moment of real defeat. George was still in the height of his rapt mood when the door of the music-room turned on its hinge. It was Miss Richmond who entered, moving gracefully forward to the concluding strains of the overture. There was no vacant seat in front, but Noel Bartholomew rose from his instantly. Félicie, who accompanied her mistress, retired to the farther end of the room.

There was no one there but was wondering what strange vagary had possessed Miss Richmond to come down from Yarrell Croft on a midwinter evening in order to be present at an entertainment which hardly pretended to be above the "penny-reading" class. She was dressed from head to foot in rich, costly furs, but the room being warm she threw her mantle aside, displaying a handsome violet-tinted dress adorned with lace and ribbons. Yet it was not her dress, but herself, that made a presence in the room—an oppressive presence for some, though she sat so quietly, and listened so attentively, resting her chin on her white hand, as she did everywhere, and leaning forward, with an apparent unconsciousness of herself, of her beauty, of her dress, that made her seem to be the most absolutely picturesque woman that ever breathed. Even Noel Bartholomew, standing there at a little distance, said to himself, "If I could paint Miss Richmond as she sits at the present moment, I should win the applause of the world for the production of a new type of feminine beauty and character."

Doubtless such a picture would have been

in a measure new. It is seldom that a woman is at once so beautiful, so strong, so varied, so capable of evil, so desirous of good, as Diana Richmond appeared to be as she sat there, listening to Mr. Severne as he sang *The Lost Chord*; to Agatha Damer when she sang *Forgive and Forget*; to Genevieve, who sang Schubert's *Adieu*. Wilfrid Stuart came in between with his violin; and Mrs. Caton swept the keys of the pianoforte with quite new force of execution since Miss Richmond was there to listen. It was well known in the neighbourhood that Miss Richmond was no musician; and say that how you will, you speak of the absence of a power not always fully understood. That the music in you is quite mute is much as if you said, "I have not learnt to speak the thing I should like to utter."

All the evening George Kirkoswald remained on the platform; he would not again desert his post, be the post ever so trifling. He stood with folded arms between the piano and the screen of red-berried holly, tall, erect, seeming as if he frowned more in thoughtfulness than in sadness or perplexity. More

than once he looked toward where Miss Richmond sat with her beautiful upturned face, and her white eyelids dropping over dark, inscrutable eyes. He felt that he had more strength within himself than he had had when he met those eyes before.

The concert came to an end at last, though the programme had not been a brief one. Noel Bartholomew came forward and shook hands with Miss Richmond, who thanked him with a quiet and intent graciousness for giving up his seat. That was the mood she was in—a quiet, graceful, courteous mood, which seemed all the quieter because no one could help divining the strong meanings and yearnings that were deliberately subdued and hidden underneath. They were only half-hidden. Every glance and gesture betrayed them. If she turned her head it was as if she cried out for sympathy.

The people were going out. Genevieve went with Mrs. Caton into the inner room to put on her hat and cloak. When George Kirkoswald came up to where Bartholomew stood listening to Miss Richmond, she was saying, "I am waiting for your daughter.

She will accept a seat in the carriage this evening, it is so cold." Then she turned to George, holding out her pretty hand, " You will persuade Miss Bartholomew, will you not ? Though it is so moonlight and so lovely, the air is very chill."

Genevieve did not need much persuasion. There was a little of the old authoritativeness in George's glance. " You will accept Miss Richmond's kindness," he said with quiet emphasis.

He went with them to the carriage. Félicie was there with rugs and shawls. The moon was shining down with its fullest, frostiest shining. Genevieve had taken her seat; Miss Richmond stood hesitating, with one foot on the step. She was looking upward; the soft light was on her face and in her wistful eyes.

" I had something to say," she began, speaking gently and slowly. " What was it ? Why should people always have to put things into words ? I wish one might be understood without words ! "

" I wonder if I do understand ? " Kirkoswald said. He could not speak plainly,

and Miss Richmond knew that he could not. Yet he felt her mood through his own. She was changing, relenting. She wished him to be happy; she wished to try to offer him recompense for the long, dull, aching misery that she had caused him. All this passed through his mind in a single flash of thought, but he could not utter it. Miss Richmond was getting into the carriage without making any sign that he could interpret. "I shall come over to Yarrell," he said. "I shall come purposely to see if you have remembered what it was that you wanted to say to me to-night."

The carriage went slowly up the cliff-side. Bartholomew and Kirkoswald followed, talking, as men will talk, of anything and everything so that it be not the thing nearest to them at the moment. Bartholomew could not help feeling both perplexed and disappointed. He had been so certain that the coming of Miss Richmond to Soulsgrif Bight had in some way been connected with the circumstances that were pressing so heavily upon himself. She had come to disclaim any influence over her brother—to decline to be

responsible for him or for his actions : there were many side-motives that she might have had. It was not uncharacteristic of her to choose a place and time so singular for any communication that she might have to make. But when opportunity came she had taken no advantage of it. And Bartholomew knew that it was not for him to do so. Diana Richmond had had nothing to do with the transactions between her brother and himself.

And Miss Richmond made no mention of the matter during the drive home. Genevieve waited expectantly ; she spoke of her father, of his work, but she did not succeed in eliciting any response that would have made it easy for her to go at once to the heart of this strange involution of things that was testing her father's strength so far. But before the carriage stopped at Netherbank, Genevieve was certain that Diana Richmond's impassiveness in the matter was a conscious and deliberate impassiveness.

“ Miss Richmond knows it all,” she said to her father next morning, as he sat there with the clear light shining down upon him, and

upon the work that he could not touch. "There is something behind that we cannot see. But we shall see if we wait."

"Do you know what waiting means, child?"

"Yes; at least I think I do. And by way of preparing for the worst I have given Keturah a week's holiday."

There was no exclamation, no expostulatory remark. Bartholomew had arrived at the point when a man becomes aware that expostulation is idle, and exclamation frivolous. He accepted, with a keen pang, the idea that his daughter must light his kitchen fire, prepare his dinner, and sweep his room. The only thing that made the idea supportable was the thought of compensation. He had a theory that a time of sadness and trial is usually followed by a time of peace and satisfaction.

"I have only to think of George Herbert when I am trying to handle Keturah's broom in the morning," Genevieve said. They were sitting in the firelight. The day had gone, and after much persuasion Keturah had gone too, but not without tears and protestations.

“ You are thinking of Herbert’s poem ? ”  
Bartholomew asked.

“ Yes :—

‘ Who sweeps a room as for Thy law,  
    Makes that and the action fine.’

So I shall sweep conscientiously ; and if I am awkward I shall think of Natalie Narishkin.”

“ And it will not be for long, dear.”

“ But you are not thinking that I am speaking of it because I mind it, father ? Indeed, you should know me better than that. No one enjoys new experiences and experiments more than I do ; I enjoy them for their own sake. . . . And there is more behind this,” Genevieve added, with a change of tone.

“ Yes, there is more behind,” Bartholomew replied. “ Through all this trial I have felt that it was a permission to taste a little of the cup of pain as it is mixed for others. Think of the people who all their life long live as we are living now—in fear, in uncertainty, and on the very verge of want. One finds the secret of such sorrow. It is not hunger, nor the dread of death by hunger. It is the continued mental anxiety, never

lifted, never relaxed. . . . May God help but one such sufferer for my suffering and my prayer to-night,” he added reverently, as a fresh gust of wind dashed a shower of sleety hail upon the window-pane.

\* \* \* \* \*

It was not the delicate, rarely-seen rime that whitened and brightened the world next morning, but the effect of the light showers of snow that had fallen during the frosty night was almost equally beautiful. If it were less mystic, more pronounced, it was also less evanescent.

Genevieve dressed herself in the chill twilight with a decided feeling of novelty and amusement. She would have no part to act for her father’s cheering and sympathy. An old tennis-apron was carefully pinned on. “I think I shall carry a duster in the pocket permanently,” she said to herself, with a smile. Then, in a graver mood, she sat down to glance for a few moments over the pages of a book that was lying on the table:—

“O righteous Father, and ever to be praised, the hour is come that Thy servant is to be proved.

“O beloved Father, meet and right it is that in this hour Thy servant should suffer something for Thy sake.

“O Father, evermore to be honoured, the hour is come which from all eternity Thou didst foreknow should come; that for a short time Thy servant should outwardly be oppressed, but inwardly should ever live with Thee.”

How small everything seemed when it was set in such a light as that! How trivial these crosses and labours were! She could only go downstairs yearning to put her best strength into each moment as it came; to do whatever her hand found to do with all the might that was in her.

These were the words that went on echoing, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do.” They seemed to be in the frosty air that was coming in at the open door. It was the orchard-door. Her father had gone down to the studio, then! She would follow him at once. Doubtless he was attempting some deed that she must disallow—lighting the studio fire, perhaps, or cleaning the grate.

All the way down under the rugged snow-laden apple-trees Genevieve went, smiling and prematurely scolding. A young spruce-fir threw its strong, snowy arms across the doorway, yet Genevieve could see that the door was open. There was a little porch of

trellis-work, with some dark, bright ivy clustering about it; and underneath . . . what was the meaning of the thing that she saw underneath?

What might it mean to see standing there, leaning back against the little porch, two large pictures in handsome brightly-gilded frames? One on either side they stood, only half under cover.

At the first glance Genevieve saw that they were the Yarrell Croft pictures.

At the second glance she saw the hand that had painted them lying outstretched across the floor, the grey head that had conceived them lying upon the fallen arm. The face was downward . . . the dark, prostrate figure stirless. . . .

But one cry—but one great, piercing cry went up through the silence—

*“My father! my father! my father! Would God I had died for thee!”*

## CHAPTER II.

“VICTORIOUS IN A STRIFE WHERE ONCE HE  
FAILED.”

“Formerly  
He turned his face upon me quick enough  
If I said ‘father.’ Now, I might cry loud.”

E. B. BROWNING.

Do people, when they lose their presence of mind, *always* do the thing that they ought not to have done? May not a serviceable instinct take the place of the lost mind? Surely the impulses that come of a lifelong habit of right feeling, sensible thinking, cannot always be wrong when called in at a crisis. It seems probable that many a one who gets credit for presence of mind in an emergency might be willing to confess that mind had nothing to do with the matter at all. A shock, a stun, scattered senses, a passionate

desire to be doing something—that is all that can be remembered, though the people praise you ever so loudly.

Genevieve Bartholomew remembered nothing afterwards but the sight of the dark, still form lying on the studio floor between the returned pictures.

Though she forgot all else she could never forget that. She did not know that she had called to her father in despairing, beseeching tones, imploring him to speak; that she had tried to lift the grey head from the floor; that, finding herself unable to do more than that, she had placed it on a cushion, and had covered the still prostrate figure with rugs. This was all done in the first moment of distraction and terror. Then the girl went flying through the orchard, and away up the snow-covered field-paths to Hunsgarth Haggis, just as she had dressed herself for her morning's work; she had not stayed even to snatch a hat or shawl. But the keen frosty air had no chillness in it; the sun rising silently upon the earth had no beauty. The whole world had only one vision—a vision of a dark figure lying lifeless, and left alone.

Her hands were clasped : she was praying passionately and audibly as she went upward. But her voice ceased presently. When she reached the Haggs she could not speak at all. She could only stand there, white, breathless, striken with horror, and pointing downward toward Netherbank.

“ It is your father ? ” Dorothy Craven said, taking the girl’s half-frozen hand. “ I’ll be ready in a minute.”

“ Come—come now ! . . . And your boy, Hanson, he will go for a doctor. . . . Come, oh, come now ! ”

They went down together, Miss Craven and Genevieve, running, hurrying breathlessly across the fields. Old Joseph Craven came to the brow of the hill. “ Eh, but it’s her,” he said, smiling in his gentle, unmeaning way. “ It’s her wi’ the bonny gold hair. She sudn’t ha’ come out wi’ that bonny hair when the snaw’s all white upon Langbarugh Moor.”

No change had passed upon the prostrate man—none that could be discerned by a glance ; but Genevieve perceived, with an intense thrill of joy, that the pulse gave faint

signs of a faint vitality. She chafed the thin hands tenderly, and bathed the helpless head. Dorothy had brought some brandy, and she set herself to administer it with a slow and cautious persistency that had its reward at last. The grey, weary eyes unclosed, the ashen lips parted—there was a moment of recompense for many moments of ill.

Full life came back slowly. Privation had told upon the man's strength more than he himself knew. But by-and-by, when Genevieve had lighted the fire and drawn the sofa forward, he was able to reach it. He was lying there when Dr. Armitage came; Dorothy had gone up to look after things in the cottage. The two pictures had been put away out of sight; the studio had been made to look tidy and cheerful, to seem warm and comfortable. There was not much, save the look on Genevieve Bartholomew's face, to give extraneous evidence as to the stun and agony that the morning had brought.

Dr. Armitage was a tall, grey-haired man, with a look of outdoor life upon his russet cheek. He had met Genevieve many a time

by the bedsides of the poor people of Murk-Marishes ; and he came into the studio with the air of an old friend.

“ Good morning, Miss Bartholomew,” he said, shaking hands heartily, and making the most of his opportunity for reading her face. “ I’m rather sorry to have a patient at Netherbank. I suppose you are finding that you are hardly yet acclimatized. Certainly this cold weather is very trying.”

Then he sat down with a careless swing in one of the uncomfortable antique chairs near the sofa. Bartholomew was sitting up, leaning forward in a tired, weary way. “ I feel very much ashamed of myself,” he said smiling, and looking more wan for the smile. “ To think of my having brought you out here at this time of day ! ”

It was a perplexing case for a doctor ; and one that required careful thought before any satisfactory diagnosis could be arrived at. The prostration of strength was only too evident ; and the fact that there had been a sudden mental shock was evident also—this Bartholomew himself confessed, as he felt bound to do ; while Genevieve sat by him,

holding his hand, and trying to keep back the slow, hot tears that came to her relief.

“ It will all come out, I am afraid,” the artist said with quivering lips. “ I would keep it quiet if I could; but the man who brought the pictures back, and put them down at my door this morning, will hardly keep such a matter secret. I fancy he was a Thurkeld Abbas man.”

“ Did he say anything, father ? ” Genevieve asked with white lips, and eyes that yet looked through a mist of tears.

“ Yes, dear; he had a message, a brief message to give. ‘ Mr. Richmond’s compliments, an’ he’s sent them pictur’s back.’ That was all the man said, but he looked more. I shall not soon forget his look. If ever man was ashamed of his errand, he was ashamed. There was another man in the lane below, I think; indeed, there must have been. The pictures are too large to have been brought even from the village by one man. . . . But I cannot tell. I was feeling faint. I had not slept all night; and I had come down here to see if the air would revive me. I had only just come when I heard a

knock at the door. The pictures were standing there, and the man with them. That is all I remember. It was a kind of climax, I suppose, the insult and the humiliation coming after long anxiety. . . . But it is over now. I shall be all right in an hour or two."

"Say a day or two, or a week or two," said Dr. Armitage. "I am not given to saying things likely to depress people, but I want you to take care of yourself a little, that is all. I shall look to Miss Bartholomew for help if I have to enforce obedience."

"You do not mean to say that, if I can work, I may not?"

"I mean to say that you may not work, that you may not think, and that you must take an abundance of extra nourishment. . . . I shall speak to Miss Bartholomew about that before I go."

Dr. Armitage made no comment concerning the confidences that had been made to him. Comment was not in his way. He was not a silent man, but he was capable of silence, especially if anything impressed him. If he were impressed now, he did not say so, but

he sat with a certain look on his face which spoke very eloquently of private opinions. This thing that he had heard was not all new to him : it was new to no one in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes, and he was not sorry to see and hear the painful truth for himself. He knew that he had stepped as it were into the very middle of a piece of tragic circumstance, but he asked no questions as to the beginning, and he could wait for the end. It was enough for him that he was in possession of the facts as they stood at present.

“ It is the insult, the humiliation,” the artist had said ; but Dr. Armitage made his own additions to this. To him, as to all other doctors, many questions not medical were presented for consideration ; and though no man could be less given to interference, he was not a man to put aside an obvious duty because it happened not to be, strictly speaking, a professional duty. It appeared to him that such a one was before him now.

“ You will understand me,” he said to Genevieve as she went with him up the orchard. “ I do not desire to know anything

more than I know already. But it seems to me that, placed as you are at present, I ought to try to be of some use to you. I mention it to you rather than to your father because he must not be harassed. Keep him from thinking of this affair as much as possible."

"You are not alarmed for him now?" Genevieve asked, with a sudden new anxiety coming into her eyes, a sudden flush of fear spreading over her white face.

There was a perceptible pause.

"I think it only my duty to say to you that the attack of this morning has been of a more critical nature than I admitted while speaking to your father. . . . I do not say this to alarm you, but to impress upon you the fact that he will require to be careful. He ought to have absolute rest from anxiety. As soon as he is fit for work I shall encourage him to begin at once, and it may be that he will throw off all this much more easily than I think. So I repeat, don't be alarmed, and spare him all the mental disquietude he may be spared. . . . Now you will understand more clearly why it is that I want you to

have some help. And since I have no time to spare, pardon my brevity. Would you like to have Mr. Kirkoswald's advice in this matter? If so I will ride round that way; or would you prefer that I should call at the Rectory as I pass, and ask Canon Gabriel to come over?"

A quick blush that was more of pain than of maiden shame surged over Genevieve's cheek.

"It will be easier for you to call at the Rectory," she said in quiet, indifferent tones.

The doctor smiled, then he said "Good-bye" in his hearty, cheery fashion, and rode off, thinking it pitiful that a woman so young, so beautiful, so regal-looking, should be buried in such a place as that, and buried under such a weight of sorrow, too. "If I were Kirkoswald she shouldn't stay there another week," he said to himself. "But, after all, the rumour that mentions the two names in a breath may be only an idle one. Rumour has been very busy about Netherbank of late."

So the doctor was thinking as he went down between the white, sparkling hedgerows. Genevieve had stopped for a moment in the

kitchen to speak to Miss Craven, who was going home. "I must go," she said. "I've left the milk stannin' in the pails; I hadn't even got it siled. But I'll be back afore long. An' Keturah 'll be here afore I get down again."

"You have sent for her?"

"Of course I've sent for her. I've sent Hanson, an' he'll fetch some groceries an' things back with him, an' leave 'em here as he passes. He doesn't know but what you've sent for 'em, so don't you say 'at you didn't. An' what are you cryin' for? It'll be all right." Then Dorothy laughed, but the tears came into her own eyes as she did so.

"It's allus the poor 'at helps the poor," she said, clasping Genevieve's proffered hand. "You've done me many a good turn afore to-day, an' I make no doubt but you'll do me many another. Not 'at I'm doin' aught now with an eye to what you'll do when you're mistress o' Usselby Hall."

"Oh! don't say that, Miss Craven, don't even think it, please," the girl begged. She was crimsoning through her tears; her lips were tremulous. "Perhaps it will never be.

I do not think it will ever be. But I will not forget—I will never forget that you have been my friend when I had no other.”

Then she went swiftly down the orchard again. The sun was shining clearly now; diamonds were dropping from the apple-boughs, the red rose-hips were gleaming through the white snow; the birds went fluttering timidly away from the branches. In the open doorway her father was standing.

The girl’s heart leapt and bounded with a great joy.

“Oh, I am glad! I am very glad; but is it wise, father?” she said, going up to him, putting her two hands on his shoulders, and holding up her smiling, trembling lips to be kissed. “You are to obey—you are to obey me: Dr. Armitage says so. And I order a sofa, with cushions, and the new novel that Mr. Kirkoswald brought, and the cups of tea that are going to be brought by-and-by. Oh, come in, come in; and let us be glad together, and happy together. . . . Try to look happier, my father!”

It was not simple unhappiness, simple despondency that was written on Bartholomew’s

face ; and Genevieve was quick to perceive that it was not. There was a new look there, a deeper gravity, a deeper quiet.

And in his heart there was a feeling that his studio where the two pictures stood was a room where some dead thing was lying.

“ Is there a fire in the sitting-room ? ” he asked.

“ Yes,” Genevieve replied. “ There is a good fire. Miss Craven has made it. And there is your easy-chair ; and Prince Camaralzaman is singing as if he had some special reason for singing. You will go there ? It will be better. . . . Shall I lock the studio door ? ”

“ Yes, dear ; lock it, please ; and put the blinds down.”

### CHAPTER III.

#### WORDS WHICH LIFT UP ONE CORNER OF THE VEIL.

“ The Divine charity, of which the Cup of the Communion is the emblem, belongs to the whole Church. To recover that Holy Cup, that real Life-blood of the Redeemer, is a quest worthy of all the chivalry of our time, worthy of all the courage of Lancelot, worthy of all the purity of Galahad.”—DEAN STANLEY.

THEY went up the orchard together, the father’s pale thin hand within the daughter’s arm. Some of Genevieve’s doves were wheeling about over the apple-boughs; the two white ones were cooing on the window-sill. Within there was a yellow rose-tree in bloom; it had only one rose, but that was something in late November; and the sunshine upon its creamy petals seemed to crown it for reward.

They sat down by the fire ; Genevieve on a footstool at her father's feet, her head resting upon his knee. It was a time to be silent ; but the silence was eloquent in its sympathy, its comfort, its perfect understanding.

Relief from a great strain, a great and sudden shock, is happiness in itself. That one may be at peace is matter for a gratitude that is almost rapture.

Presently Keturah came. There was a tear glistening in her round surprised eyes ; but she wiped it quickly away because Joe Hanson was there with Miss Craven's butter-basket full of packages ; and also because Canon Gabriel was coming along the pathway through the field. The old man seemed paler and more fragile than ever as he entered the little sitting-room where Bartholomew sat holding his chill hands to the fire.

“ I shall leave you to entertain each other,” Genevieve said. “ I am going to make some beef tea. Then I shall come and expect to be entertained in recognition of my services. . . . Father, you will not let Canon Gabriel miss my chattering tongue ! ”

“Then don’t stay long enough to be missed, dear,” said the artist, speaking as if it were a pain to him to miss her at all. He looked up at the Canon as the door closed, and the Canon understood the look.

“The wind is tempered for you, my friend,” the old man said, seating himself opposite to Bartholomew.

“Yes: but the wind is a little rough,” said the younger man. Then, after a pause, he added, “Tell me how much you know about its roughness?”

“How much I know! Well, you remember how much I knew when we spoke of this matter before—was it a fortnight ago? . . . I have heard nothing further until this morning, until Dr. Armitage poured his indignation into my ears.”

“He was indignant? . . . Sorrow is not all sorrow. The man who has but the sympathy of one friend is not left without assurance.”

“You can feel that? Then one need not sorrow for you as one sorrows for those who have no hope. . . . All the same, this trial must have its own keenness.”

“ It seemed to have until this morning.”

“ And since ? ”

Bartholomew paused before he replied. He was recalling the events which had happened to him since daylight had spread across the frosty skies.

“ Since the stroke fell, I have not for one moment recognized the weight of it,” he said. “ I had no time to recognize it before unconsciousness came down ; and since that I have had no inclination to dwell upon it. . . . Genevieve is feeling it far more than I am. Feeling seems almost dead within me at present ; but it is not so with her. She is enduring at the highest point of endurance. If you can say one word to help her, then, for Heaven’s sake, say it before you go.”

Almost as he spoke Genevieve came in, bringing a little china tray with a china cup full of beef tea.

“ Was there ever anything so dainty ? ” she said, kneeling on one knee, and turning the tray so that the morsels of dry toast should lie under her father’s hand. . . . “ And now I am going to talk to Canon Gabriel,” she added, seating herself on her own little

chair in front of the fire. She still had her tennis-apron on, with its embroidered spray of clematis all across it. Her cap had been thrown aside sometime during the morning. She leaned her head back against the chair ; her lips quivered, her eyes closed wearily ; then the tears began to drop slowly over her face. They would not be kept back any longer now.

They were quite silent tears ; and seeing that they were tears of relief the Canon made no effort to check them. He took Genevieve's hand in his, and stroked it gently and tenderly as he would have stroked the hand of a sick child.

“It has all been so strange !” she said presently, speaking out of the middle of her own *résumé* of things. “It has been so unexpected, so unaccountable, so unforgivable !”

“Unforgivable ?” the Canon repeated, lifting his fine spiritual face with a look of surprise. “Are you finding yourself unable to forgive ?”

“Yes,” said the girl, seeming as if the question had roused her to a newer and more passionate pain. “Yes : I must tell the

truth ; it will do me good to tell the truth, since it hurts me to keep it. I am feeling full of unforgivingness, full of bitterness, full of resentment. They have been so hard, these people. There was the long silence, the refusal to answer my father's letters, though he wrote so quietly, so patiently ; that was an insult that was difficult to bear ; nay, it was more than that, it was an oppression. And now this last blow, this worst wrong, this worst injustice, could they have done it in a more cruel and stinging way ? . . . The deed was theirs, the stroke that laid my father low ; but it is not their mercy that has brought him back to life, not their goodness that gave him back to me. Can I ever forget ? Can I ever forgive ? . . . But help me, help me if you can ; for it is such a misery as I have never known, this hardness that is in me, this indignation, this ceaseless sense of embittered feeling. . . . Deliver me from it ; deliver me if you can. Say something to make me feel as if I could forgive ! ”

“ You want to forgive, then ? ” the old man asked, speaking very quietly.

"Yes," the girl said, clasping her hands, trying to keep back a fresh flow of tears. "Yes; I do want to forgive them. I would if I could. And I want to do it now before the sense of wrong wears itself out. There is no virtue in the forgiveness that comes of forgetfulness."

"Then it is because you know forgiveness to be a duty that you desire to arrive at it?"

"It is only partly that," Genevieve said. "But, of course, I believe that it is a duty. I have always thought that forgiveness of a person who had grievously and deliberately injured another, and had never repented of the injury, was the hardest duty the Christian creed demands."

"And you know my opinion, that it is as it were the very core and centre of practical Christianity?"

"Yes: I have not forgotten the day in Soulsgrif Bight. All this morning the words have been ringing in my ears, '*The love that taketh not account of evil.*' But let me speak the truth, let me confess that I am not only taking account of evil, I am overcome of it."

"Let me speak, dear," Bartholomew in-

terposed. He was listening quietly, his clasped hands resting upon the arm of his chair. "Let me speak. I think, being a little excited, you are disposed to exaggerate your ill-feeling. Let me ask one question. If it were in your power to do any injury to either Mr. Richmond or to his sister, would you do it? Take time to reply."

"Would I injure them?" Genevieve exclaimed, taking no time at all. "No; certainly. You knew that, my father, before you asked. Unforgiveness does not mean a desire for revenge. If any opportunity for doing them a kindness were to come in my way, I should probably be even more anxious to do it than if they had never hurt us or pained us at all. Sometimes I think that persistent revenge is dying out from among human passions. It seems to belong to Greek literature."

"I fear that is taking too favourable a view of matters," said the Canon. "I am afraid that with the uncultivated, the isolated, revenge may still acquire power enough to become a monomania."

Bartholomew looked at him intently as

he spoke. Was there any hidden meaning bearing upon present events underlying the Canon's words ? Did he remember the remarks he had made months ago concerning the conflicting passions and emotions written on the face of the Judas, remarks made even while discerning an unintended likeness in the features and expression of the face on the canvas ? “It is like Miss Richmond !” Mr. Severne had said ; and no one had contradicted him.

“Perhaps you are right,” Genevieve said, answering Canon Gabriel. “But you will believe that I am not revengeful, that I have no desire to see my father's wrongs avenged in any way.”

“What do you desire ?” asked the Canon. “What is your highest and strongest wish ?”

“My highest wish of all is that Miss Richmond, or Mr. Richmond, or both of them together, might come down and say, ‘We are sorry for all this pain.’”

“And what excuse, what motive would you wish them to urge for having caused the pain ?” asked Bartholomew.

“I would wish them to tell the truth,

whatever the truth may be. If all is as I suspect, Miss Richmond would say, being in a regretful and human mood, 'I have come down to explain, to tell you that my brother gave these commissions thoughtlessly, that our silence was the result of an habitual carelessness about small things that do not concern ourselves; that not understanding the value of works of art, and considering the price of the pictures to be above their worth, we returned them, not dreaming for a moment that it would really matter to Mr. Bartholomew whether we kept them or not; and that now we have discovered that our carelessness and aloofness has caused you distress, we are anxious to make such atonement as we may.' . . . There! you have my highest notion of the good that could come out of all this evil."

"And from that time there would be no more unforgivingness?"

"There would be no more unforgivingness. There would be comprehension, with a high admiration on my part for the man or woman who could confess to having erred in understanding."

"Then my advice," said the Canon, "is simply this, that you should suppose that the Richmonds would do all that you dream might be done if their human culture had been such as to lead them to the conception of it. For my own part, I have little but pity for them in this matter, supposing it all to be as you say; and I think it very probable that your suppositions may be correct. They are not so low down in the scale of humanity, but they must feel a great deal more than they seem to feel. I pity them, the uneasy remorse they must have, that they will certainly have when they hear of your father's illness; the consciousness of an essential vulgarity in their deed; the utter unsatisfactoriness of such a victory as they probably imagine themselves to have gained. Pitying them, I could only pray for them, as one prays for all those who spitefully use one. Try that—prayer for them. Pray not only that you may be enabled to forgive them, but that you may see the result of your prayers for their welfare in their continued prosperity, their continued safety, their increased happiness, their additional peace. Pray for their

worldly good first; then for their higher good. It is not impossible in the providence of God that you should be permitted to see the outcome of prayers made from such a motive as yours would be. That once discerned you will no longer find yourself praying for power to forgive."

Even as the old man spoke it seemed as if the wild waves of intolerant impulse were stilled a little. It was easier to think kindly of the people who had caused all this suffering; easier to believe that her father might come out from it unhurt, perhaps even with no smell of fire upon his garment.

"It is always so," said the Canon, in answer to some remark of Genevieve's. "It is always so. Christ speaking to His disciples spoke of two conditions on which their prayers should be answered. His followers were to have faith, and they were to forgive.

*"And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any."*

"And we all of us have the feeling within ourselves that when we are at peace with the world it is far easier to enter into the peace

that is between God and our own souls—that is, or *may be*—it is never broken by Him.

"But I did not come only to try to comfort you with words," the old man went on, not hesitating, not speaking with difficulty, but with a beautiful ease and tranquillity of manner. "I came to try to help, if help may be. I need hardly ask you to let me try, if you consider that my friendship entitles me to the privilege. . . . In the first place, do you not think that I might call upon the Richmonds, and either explain, or ask them to explain? I propose this at a venture, not knowing what you may be wishing or intending to do."

"I have had no time to intend anything yet," replied Bartholomew. "But I could hardly bear that any friend of mine should go to Yarrell in my name, and entreat the Richmonds to take the pictures now. . . . No, that could never be. . . . Besides, there is another reason," he continued. Then he stopped. He could not say that he did not dare to think of one so aged, so frail, so sensitive, exposing himself to the excitement and annoyance of such an interview as that

would probably be. If any one went to Yarrell Croft, it should be Kirkoswald, who was stronger, more astute, and would be better able to meet the Richmonds on their own ground.

Perhaps the Canon misunderstood the sudden pause, the silence; he did not urge his offer of help. "If there is anything I can do you will not hesitate to ask me," he said. "And since that matter is disposed of, I will pass on to the next. Have you sold the Judas—the original head, I mean?"

"No," said Bartholomew, smiling. "One does not expect to sell pictures in Murk-Marishes. Besides, that was only a study."

"But, as you know, a most masterly study. I have felt motions of covetousness since the first moment I saw it. Am I asking too much in asking you to let me have it?"

"Certainly I will let you have it if you have taken a fancy to it. . . . You must leave it a little while, though, till I get the head of the figure finished. I mean to finish it now."

There was a little friendly difference about the price; but the Canon knew the value of his purchase too well to take it at Bartho-

lomew's own inadequate appraisement. Of course the artist understood the old man's motive in buying it just now; but the Canon did not divine to the full all that his small act meant. Genevieve knew, and Dorothy Craven knew, and perhaps Keturah might guess, since there was no more any need for anxiety concerning the daily bread. It was as if a great weight had been lifted off from every heart under the roof of the thatched cottage; a weight that no man nor woman may appreciate until they have staggered along under it for weary days and wearier nights; until they have learnt that a failing pulse means a failing hope, a failing enterprise, a failure of the very desire for life itself. But the lesson once learnt is not forgotten, and the human being who has it in remembrance looks out over God's world with eyes that see farther and penetrate deeper than the eyes of the man whose worst earthly trial is the incompetency of his cook. Some knowledge is power, and some knowledge is light, and there is a knowledge that is as purifying as fire from off the altar.

## CHAPTER IV.

“LET JOY BREAK WITH THE STORM.”

“O sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,  
Be sometimes lovely, like a bride,  
And put thy harsher moods aside  
If thou wilt have me wise and good.”

*In Memoriam.*

THAT same November afternoon closed in darkly and heavily; a wide band of gleaming light stretched right across the outer sea-edge; the sullen curtain above dropped its fringe into the silver. There was light shining somewhere—there is always light somewhere, be the day ever so dark where one sits drooping for the need of sun.

Though there was no sunshine at Netherbank Genevieve was not drooping. She was sitting beside her father. The Prince was silent on his perch. The snow was thawing

fast away; great water-drops were trickling down from the eaves, making the ivy-leaves and the bare brown stems of the honeysuckle quiver under the heavy dropping. The sound of the gurglings and babblings of the tiny runlets came even to the fireside of the little room in the stubble-field.

"It is really like living in a tent," Genevieve said, breaking in upon the long quiet. People do not care to talk who have only just come through the storm. The rush of the tempest is still in their ears, with the sound of the wind that swept them on to the rocks of fateful circumstance. They are glad to sit by safe fires, to brood in silence upon the danger overpast.

To Noel Bartholomew it seemed already as if the events of the morning had happened weeks ago. The anxiety had gone from his face, the nervous apprehensiveness from his manner. What apprehensiveness was left to him now was for his daughter. Had the pain passed from his soul only to fall into hers? Her little irrelevant remarks did not deceive him. Her care to put on a pretty dress, to arrange a dainty tea-table,

did not confuse his perception of things. The physiognomy of sorrow is unmistakable to eyes trained by sorrow ; and you shall not need to tell your tale to one acquainted with grief.

All the afternoon he had thought only of her, of that hope which was half a dread that he had had concerning her in the spring ; which had been deferred so strangely all through the summer ; and now was apparently passing out of all recognition as a distinct idea. He had not understood ; he had only once asked his daughter if there was anything that he might understand ; and her reply had for the moment almost satisfied him. It was not so long ago, only a few weeks since she had said, “Silence is not congenial to me ; but I would rather keep silence in this instance ; and you may trust *him* too. I know that you may trust him.”

That day also had been put farther back for Bartholomew by the stress and strain of intervening circumstance. His own feeling in the matter, his perfect trust, his perfect patience, was half-forgotten. What if after

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all he had to go, to leave his child friendless, penniless, and alone? What then? . . . There was a great silence in the man's heart, the silence of an inexpressible anguish.

Even as he endured it he was watching her as she moved about the room, placing the lamp on the bracket between the windows, lifting the yellow rose-tree to the table, drawing the curtains, arranging the tea-cups, stirring the fire into a blaze. The great grey cloud curtain was descending now, dashing in wild rain-drops upon the window-pane; the chill wind was coming gustily up from the sea. It was the sort of night when people awake afresh to appreciation of their comforts, their protections, their alleviations. However unsatisfactory their surroundings may be at other times, they become satisfactory by such sharp contrast as memory, inspired by rough elements, can present to most people on occasion.

“What a dismal night for those who are compelled to be out!” Genevieve was saying. Her eye had fallen upon the little *Viking*. Was poor Ailsie out? Was she there

wandering up and down among the rough, dark stones, where the white foam was breaking? There, also, there was trouble; and up at Hunsgarth Haggs there was trouble. Dorothy Craven's face had gone back to the old thinness and paleness that it had worn before that gleam of brightness had struck her path; and though she made no complaint Genevieve knew that hope was dead or dying within her. Had George Kirkoswald forgotten Miss Craven?

Had he forgotten other things? What was he thinking? How was he bearing now? Was he still weary of endurance, was he still feeling weary of long silence, long restraint? "If you are weary, then I am not weary," Genevieve had said, only a few weeks before. "Could she say the same thing now?" she asked herself; and the answer was, "No; if he ask me now I must say I *am* weary, I am very weary, and my heart cries out unceasingly that you would put an end to its weariness."

She had not seen George since the evening of the concert. It was only four days, but it was long enough for surprise, for pain—a pain which had been felt through all the other

sorrows that had come thronging into the days. It was worse to bear because he had been so kind, so full of tenderness on that evening. All the strong passionate love within her had gathered itself up to meet the renewed shows of love in him. She had had a feeling of coming good, coming joy. Her soul had borne itself receptively. She had waited for a shower of blessing ; but instead there had been a very hailstorm of trials and wrongs and consequent sufferings. But the one help, the one countenance that would have given support above all others, had been wanting, and it was little wonder that all the other pain was understruck by emptiness and aching.

She had had no time to brood over these things in silence ; and it was well that she had not. But there was time enough for a yearning between the pouring out of cups of tea, for a cry of unsatisfied love while arranging the cushions of her father's chair, and stooping to stroke the grey tired head that seemed to be bowed with a new pathos every time she looked at it. She had put his cup of tea on her own little table by his side ; the

rain was still rattling wildly on the window-pane ; mingled with its dashing there was a sound of quick footsteps, of a sharp, decided knocking ; Keturah's voice was answering George Kirkoswald.

He came in, seeming now, as always, to fill the narrow room, to fill it with strength, and power, and protection against all harm and ill. It was impossible that any shadow of doubt, of distrust, of displeasure, should linger in his presence. Some strong and fine individuality in the man attested the moral purity and rarity of the atmosphere about him. There was a distressed surprise on his face this evening ; and the lines on his forehead and about his mouth were eloquent of the working of some fervid and absorbing emotion.

He hardly spoke in his surprise. Bartholomew's lip quivered humorously under his grey moustache. "And when she came back the dog was laid laughing," he said, offering his hand to Kirkoswald's strong warm grasp. "That is a quotation from the antique mythological poem known as 'Mother Hubbard.' "

“So I perceive,” said Kirkoswald. “And you are equal to quotation?” he asked, looking into the grey stricken face before him, seeing there evidence enough that the tale that had been told to him by Dr. Armitage had not been overcharged with colour.

“Have you dined? Will you have a cup of tea?” Genevieve asked, looking up with a pale pink colour flitting across her cheek, and the bright light of a new gladness in her eyes.

“I had my dinner at one o’clock,” George said. “I dined in the refreshment-room at York Station. I shall be very glad of a cup of tea if you will give me one.”

“You have been to York again?” Bartholomew asked.

“Yes: I went there three days ago, the day after the concert. Poor Warburton has had a relapse,” said George. He did not add that Mrs. Warburton had telegraphed a little prematurely in her fright and concern. Her husband had spoken so warmly of his friend that her first thought had turned toward him in a moment of sudden dread and perplexity. She had begged to be forgiven. She was in

a strange place, strange to her ; and she felt lonely and unnerved when her husband was ill. "I am happy when I only know that you are on your way to us," she had said with a tear of thankfulness in her eyes.

"Then you have not been to Usselby yet ?" said Bartholomew.

"No : I have not been home," George replied, going to the table for the cup of tea that Genevieve was pouring out for him. "I met Armitage at Gorthwaite Station ; he was on his way to Market-Studley. He told me to tell you that it might be afternoon to-morrow before he found his way to Netherbank."

There was a pause. Genevieve was sitting in her own low chair with the firelight on her face ; her hand was on the arm of her father's chair.

"I suppose Dr. Armitage would tell you more than that ?" she said, looking up at George, with the recollection of the storm and terror of the morning in her eyes, and speaking with a pathetic vibration in her voice.

"Yes," replied Kirkoswald, the look of

compression coming back to his lips swiftly, and the lines on his forehead drawing themselves together in a way that was curious to see. “Yes; he told me more than that; he told me all that a discreet doctor might tell even to his patient’s closest friend. He had evidently made up his mind how much he might say, and how much he must leave unsaid; and no indiscretion of mine tempted him beyond his line. I dare say I didn’t use as much judgment in putting my questions as I might have done. I was too—too much surprised.”

“You will find yourself more at liberty here,” said Bartholomew, looking up quietly, openly. “There is nothing in this matter that need be kept secret from you.”

And nothing was kept secret, nothing but the terribleness of the strain of actual want, the long-continued insufficiency of food, and the distressing pressure caused by a few small debts. All else was laid open, disclosed without exaggeration, without bitterness, but with every expression of a keen surprise, a still keener perplexity.

“It is the absence of motive, or rather the

obscurity of motive, that exercises me," said Noel Bartholomew.

"Every one who knows the story will explain it for himself," interposed Genevieve. "And the general explanation will be that the pictures have not given satisfaction."

"Will it be considered a satisfactory way of expressing dissatisfaction, the sending of the pictures back again without a word of previous warning?" asked Bartholomew; "the sending a man to put them down at the painter's door before the day had fairly broken?"

The depth of Noel Bartholomew's suffering, the intensity of the anguish he was enduring and hiding, had not betrayed itself before. It was betrayed now, not in the words used in asking these questions, but in the tone of unutterable cruciation in which he spoke.

He leaned his head back against his chair, pallid, exhausted. Was the terrible unconsciousness coming down upon him again? Genevieve rose to her feet, and put her arm about the tired, trouble-stricken head. Then

she pressed her pale lips upon the hot, aching forehead.

"It cannot happen again, my father," she said, in low soft tones. "It is over, and other things are over, and we shall see, believe me, my father, we shall see a long light and peace for this strife and darkness. Believe, believe that we shall yet see compensation."

Kirkoswald sat silently, silently thinking, silently wondering. His own temperament was poetic, and therefore artistic in a sense, enabling him to comprehend where some would have been confounded. He knew well enough that the brain that expends itself in search of beauty, in search of the last expression and effect of beauty, will have no life left wherewith to live the common life, the life of endurance of human hardness, of human shortsightedness, of human greed, of human self-seeking. It was not incomprehensible to him that this man should be unable to meet an amount of insolence, of humiliation, that a commoner man would have passed by with a smile of contempt. It was not incomprehensible to him, though he did not know the worst, that this blow should

have struck straight to the root of life itself. Perhaps he comprehended it all too plainly for his peace of mind. Not that he was thinking of his peace of mind then ; on the contrary, his resolution was leading him into the thick of the strife.

His time had come, his time for action, for strong determination, for a fight that could but end in freedom, be the fray ever so dark and desperate, so he said to himself as he sat there thinking.

“ You will know that I am at your service,” he said presently, “ and you will know that my words are not idle words. Action in this matter is unavoidable now ; in the name of the common rights of humanity it is unavoidable. . . . Forgive me for saying, perhaps prematurely, that action is my duty as well as my privilege.”

There was another pause. “ I think I agree with you that some movement is desirable,” said Bartholomew, who had recovered himself, and was leaning forward with his hands clasped in the old way on the arm of his chair. “ I had resolved upon some step. I thought of you first ; then I thought of

Montacute, the lawyer at Thurkeld Abbas. You will know him? Years ago we were friends in a certain sense. I know him to be an upright man."

"As upright as a pillar of granite, and as hard."

"Is that your view of him? It was never mine," said the artist. "I thought him human above all the lawyers I had ever known. I have a firm impression that in this matter he would deal humanly."

"What could he do?"

Bartholomew smiled. "I know no more than a child what he could do. But I know that if skill or knowledge could avail, these things would not be wanting. Do you know Montacute at all? He used to amaze me. I always thought of him as a man who could twine an Act of Parliament round his little finger with a smile. But it would have had to be a very bad act. A right cause was safe in his hands always."

Kirkoswald did not reply at once. After a time he said, "Perhaps I do not know the man as you know him. Our affairs have always been in the hands of Waterland of

Market-Studley ; and, of course, I have left them there. Once or twice Mr. Montacute has had to do with matters of ours that were involved, as legal matters always are involved, and I have never known aught of him but the uprightness you speak of. All the same, he impressed me as having an immense and intense inflexibility."

" Uprightness must always be inflexible."

" True ! And, of course, you neither desire nor require deviation. All you want is justice, or rather equity ; but the latter is more difficult of obtainment than the former."

The poor artist closed his eyes wearily. He would have been glad if he might have closed them altogether upon this irksome entanglement, the first entanglement of the kind that he had ever known. For him all discord had a taint of lowness, an element of commonness, of coarseness. It seemed as if this thing were entering into his inner life, making havoc there. He was but wanting justice ; yet if he got it, would it not seem as a kind of revenge, a kind of victory that would be more humiliating than any failure ? Oh, how weary he was of it all ! And here was

this strong unwearied man begging with kind earnestness that he might take the burden, that he might fight the battle.

“ You shall do as you will,” he said at last, in answer to a plea of Kirkoswald’s. Genevieve had gone out to speak to Keturah about some supper for her father ; the two men went on talking, planning. Bartholomew was a little anxious about the quiet conducting of the matter. When Genevieve came back again, pale, yet smiling, looking up with sweet tired eyes, George was saying—

“ Trust me, what I do, I will do quietly. I hope I shall be able to come down to-morrow evening, and tell you that the affair is settled one way or another. Don’t think about it now ; if you can, put it away, or if you must think of it, think of it as some one else’s affair, something with which you have no concern.”

To himself he added, “ And when that is settled there will be another matter to be settled.” He looked up with the thought, the resolution in his eyes ; and Genevieve understood it, or thought that she understood. He was saying again to her, as he had said to her

father, "Trust me," and he was silently adding, "Trust me for more than this, for more than a small effort to help a friend. Trust me through the silence, trust me through the darkness, trust me for life, trust me for love. I will not fail you."

And plainly as a look could answer, the look in Genevieve's deep dark eyes said, "I know, I know certainly that you will not fail me."

All the evening George Kirkoswald lingered there by the cottage fireside. He liked the brightness, the pleasantness, the warm poetic human life.

"I always think this is the most homelike home I know," he said, looking round upon the well-filled bookshelves, the pale coral-tinted walls, the pretty bright chintzes, the few ornaments, the many evidences of artistic instincts and occupations. Genevieve had on a dark warm-tinted dress which made her look fairer than ever; and her lovely shining hair seemed to light up the place where she sat. Kirkoswald could almost see the tired look fading away from her face. The sunniness came back to her spirit; the little quick,

bright sayings that he loved so much to hear fell from her lips as they had been used to do. It was as if months of dreariness and weariness had been blotted out in the sudden warmth of this new and unspoken understanding.

Even Bartholomew felt and understood something of it; the influence came to him as an alleviation. If the morning had been dark, surely the evening was bright and good; surely it held a promise of brightness and goodness to come.

It was like listening to music, to something that had opened with crashing chords, and wild clanging dissonances. Then, when the brain was wearied, and the ear deafened and pained to the uttermost, all had changed.

Here was a sweet fireside song; a few bars of a restful, mystic harmony which soothed like a wind-harp, and had power to uplift as well as to tranquillize. The parting words were said to this accompaniment.

When Kirkoswald had gone the music fell a little, the strain had loneliness in it, the last cadence dropped into the moaning wind, and went sighing across the rain-swept fields sadly, tremblingly.

## CHAPTER V.

“THUS I ENTERED, AND THUS I GO.”

“Bear up, my soul, a little longer yet;  
A little longer to thy purpose cling.”

WORSLEY’S *Odyssey*.

GEORGE KIRKOSWALD looked very resolute as he walked over the corner of Langbarugh Moor that frowned darkly between Usselby Hall and Yarrell Croft. It was the day after the day that had been so sadly eventful at Netherbank. The rain was over. There was a sunny grey-white mist lying upon the Marishes. Beyond there was a grey sea, with dark-hulled ships moving north and south.

To his dismay, George saw that there were two or three carriages drawn up in the yard at the back of Yarrell Croft. “There are people there, then,” he said to himself somewhat impatiently. Nevertheless, he went in. The big drawing-room was hot;

it was half-full of people who had come over to luncheon. They were talking, laughing. Diana was in a new mood. Her colour rose when George went in, and a quick, pleased light shot into her eyes.

“Now, I call this provoking,” she said. “If I had asked you to come you would have declined. Don’t take the trouble to be polite; but since you are here, sit down, and try to be sociable for once. Do you know that you are getting a dreadful character for unsociableness?”

All this was rather terrible to George Kirkoswald.

“I think, then, that it will be only honest to say that I came on business,” he replied, looking very intently into Miss Richmond’s face, and speaking so that his admission could be distinctly heard. A curious little pause in the general conversation followed, compelling him to add, “But don’t let me intrude either my business or myself. I will come again. Will it suit you if I come to-morrow about this time?”

“It will suit me well; eminently well. After so much pleasure—I may even call it

dissipation—at Yarrell, to-morrow will be a day of dulness, of unendurable reaction. Come to-morrow by all means. Only let me say, I don't believe in your business. Our possessions don't touch. There is Birkrigg beck between. Are you going to propose a division of the beck? or of the stones at the bottom of it?"

"I will not go into the question to-day," George said. He was a little amazed at Miss Richmond's unusual mood. Had she mistaken his errand? Had she guessed it rightly? It would have been only natural if she had guessed it; and if so, if this were the cause of the strange change in her, what was underlying her conduct towards Bartholomew?—*her* conduct, George said to himself always, never dreaming of referring any decisive motive to the well-dressed and well-contented young man who was teaching bagatelle to three pretty frilled and flounced girls in the recess by the window. George watched him wonderingly, and somewhat compassionately. "It was not Cecil's doing, that act of yesterday morning," he said to himself as he sat listening to Mrs. Aylmer's

advanced views on feminine suffrage. He listened patiently for awhile; then, hoping that he had done all that was required of him, he went away.

He was in considerable perplexity as he went; his disappointment was not his only.

Should he go down to Netherbank for the purpose of explaining that an untoward chance had hindered him from fulfilling his intentions? It seemed hardly worth while to risk the producing of a depressing effect when, in all probability, he would be able to go down on the following evening with relief on his lips, and satisfaction. He would have been glad enough to go down, so glad that he looked for selfishness in his desires, and seemed to find it. Since he could take down with him nothing to put an end to any pain, or any sore feeling, then why need he go at all? He would wait. Waiting was difficult; so surely it would be right and wise.

He was in a different mood when he entered the drawing-room at Yarrell on the following afternoon; and Miss Richmond was in another mood also. He was prepared for a sterner strife, a more prolonged effort, than he had

at first anticipated. Thinking over things in the silence of the night, he had come certainly to the conclusion that Diana Richmond was prepared for conflict of some kind.

As was natural to her, she had in the first instance considered her dress carefully, not considering what would be the proper thing for a woman approaching middle age to wear in her own house as a morning dress. Such an idea would be the last likely to occur to her. It was not that she was ignorant—this by no means; but she was defiant, and had a passion for effective colour. This afternoon she wore a dress of richly tinted Indian silk, relieved by masses of dark, changeful velvet. There was some fine old lace round the throat, and an enamelled cross fastened it in front. Her beautiful hands were half covered with jewels.

Kirkoswald was tolerably free from personal vanity, but he could hardly help feeling as he entered the room that his shabby loose grey coat was of the nature of a solecism. Miss Richmond was sitting there in her low chair with a mass of white lace arranged carelessly upon it, so that her dark head was thrown into relief; her eyes had a heightened

brilliancy, her cheeks a touch of colour. Though it was so early, he could hardly help the feeling that she had been waiting for him, expecting him.

His task might have seemed even more difficult than it did seem, if he had known how long she had been waiting for this present moment. She had just been saying to herself, “I have waited for it for years. I have desired it passionately.”

The usual greetings were said, the usual remarks made on the changefulness of the weather. Diana all the while was watching George carefully, admiring the look of resoluteness on his face; there was resoluteness even in the way he sat on his chair. She smiled a little as she watched.

“I shall begin to believe in your business, after all,” she said presently. She spoke with the studied deliberateness she always used, so that no word of hers ever seemed to be said with too great ease or lightness.

“I think you can hardly refuse to believe in it, either in the existence of it or in the importance of it,” George replied. Then he added in a more conciliatory tone, “Indeed, I

am sure you will not refuse to consider the matter. You know something of it already, of course. I am speaking of the two pictures that Mr. Bartholomew has painted for your brother."

The changes that passed over Diana's face were very slight. Her eyelids drooped a little, as if she would see Kirkoswald's face more clearly; her under lip was drawn in. Presently she leaned forward, resting her fine oval chin on her white hand.

"I thought the matter had brought *you* here," she said. "I knew that yesterday. . . . How was it that Mr. Bartholomew could not come himself?"

"He could hardly have done that. Pardon me, but your own perception will enable you to see why he could not come on such an errand, even supposing that he had been well enough to do so. You will have heard of his illness?"

"I heard yesterday that he was ill. I heard this morning that he was walking in the field near his house."

"Probably. All the same, the attack was a serious one. Dr. Armitage is of opinion

that had Bartholomew been alone at the time he would not have recovered.”

“Poor man! . . . What was the cause of it?” asked Miss Richmond, using an inexpressiveness of tone and manner that was admirable under the circumstances.

Kirkoswald paused. How could he explain to a nature like this the depth, the intensity of the suffering endured by a man endowed as Bartholomew was endowed, with a temperament of such hyper-sensitiveness, that an idle or unthinking word would lower his mental tone for days? How could he make her to see the intimate connection between such a man and his work, a connection so close that the mere careless mention of anything he had done would sting him like a cut with a fine lash? The difficulty of the task seemed insuperable.

“Since you ask me what was the cause of his illness, I must, of course, believe that you do not even guess. . . . It was the return of the pictures in a manner so unexpected, so inconsiderate, that struck him the blow from which he has not yet recovered, from which he may never quite recover.”

There was a noticeable pause before Miss Richmond smiled. She did, however, smile, and incredulously.

“How tragic!” she said at last.

George compressed his lips, and succeeded in his effort to be silent.

“What is that quotation one often sees?” Diana said; “something like—

‘What great events from little causes spring!’

It used to be in one of my lesson-books.”

“Does this seem to you a little cause?”

“Eminently little.”

“The whole matter seems to you a small one?”

Diana smiled again. “You have lost none of your old diplomatic talent,” she said. Then a change toward something of hardness, of defiance, crept into the curves about her mouth, and she added, “The matter is small in one way; ask any one whether they would not consider the incident a trifling one in the life of a man like Noel Bartholomew? But it is not small in another way. . . .”

Miss Richmond paused here. Her eyes

seemed to fill with a deeper darkness, her lips to meet with a fuller strength. Her utterance was more than ever deliberate, studied, inexpressive.

"It is not a small matter to me to feel that advantage has been taken of my brother's inexperience," she said, watching Kirkoswald through her half-closed eyes with a curious intentness.

George started in his chair visibly. A dark colour spread over his face, a light like flame shot from his eyes.

"You believe that? You believe that of *him*—of Noel Bartholomew? Are you . . .?"

"Am I mad? Well, no; I think not. It seems to me that it is because I am so sane that I refuse to be imposed upon."

"Then it *is* the price? I would not believe it; I could not, since the pictures seemed to me to be worth so much more than the price asked. Even to myself I have insisted that you did not consider them to be satisfactory. That is what every one is considering."

"And you are afraid that his reputation will suffer?"

"Not for a moment. Such reputation as

he has will not be touched by an experience he may happen to have at Murk-Marishes."

"That is precisely what I said to Cecil. . . . By the way, let me take the opportunity of explaining that whatever blame there may be in the matter is mine, not my brother's. He is a fool in such things. He acted foolishly in the first instance, in giving any commission whatever, and, though he does not admit it, I am fully convinced that the commissions were extorted by means of undue pressure. Cecil does not admit this, as I have said, but neither does he deny it, and on these two facts, undue pressure and exorbitant price, I shall take my stand. And let me say plainly, it will save time—I mean to fight the battle to the end."

George was silent a moment. The colour had gone out of his face; even his lips were pale.

"It will help to enliven a winter at Yarrell Croft," he said, knowing that he sent his small arrow to the white.

"It will," Diana replied. "I was dreading the tedium of the next four months."

"And nothing will move you, nothing will

touch you—not even Dr. Armitage's declaration that another such shock might be fatal?"

"That sounds very commonplace."

Again Kirkoswald was silenced by hardness, elusiveness, impassibility. He broke the silence presently.

"Before I pass on to another matter," he said, "there are one or two small points that I should be glad to have explained. May I ask why you have not made some of these objections sooner—for instance, when the first picture was finished? You saw the size of it; you must have had some idea of the value of it. Why did you not speak then?"

Diana smiled. "This is new," she said. "It is a long time since I have been put through such a catechism as this."

"You are not bound to answer my questions if you find them inconvenient."

"Thank you; then we will let the matter drop."

"You wish it? You will not think of the pain you are causing? You will not even consent to any compromise?"

"Not now. . . . Since you know so much of the Bartholomews and their affairs, you

will be aware that my brother wrote, endeavouring to effect a compromise ? ”

“ Hardly that ! I beg your pardon, but I believe that the letter was simply a request that Mr. Bartholomew would take the pictures back, and try to dispose of them.”

“ That was an opening, of course,” said Diana.

“ Then it should have been more straightforward.”

“ A quality you do not lack.”

“ Thank you ; I seem to need it at present.”

“ I do not dislike it,” said Miss Richmond languidly. “ But you spoke of another matter. Will you not bring your straightforwardness to bear upon that ? ”

“ You anticipate it, of course,” said George, feeling as if he were entering upon a mere formality that admitted of neither desire nor fear. “ It concerns the letter you wrote to me a few months ago, after you had discovered that an engagement existed between Miss Bartholomew and myself.”

“ An engagement ! . . . This is interesting. May I congratulate you ? ”

“ It would give me extreme pleasure to feel

that you could do so sincerely,” George said, wondering, half-hoping, betraying himself needlessly.

Diana laughed, a long, low, rippling laugh, that had something almost like enchantment in it. Yet it was sufficiently disillusioning.

“I perceive,” he said. “Forgive the mistake.”

“One might forgive you anything; you are so credulous, so easily imposed upon. You are just what you always were.”

As Miss Richmond spoke she took out from a fold of her dress a small morocco case, opened it, and looked at it awhile intently. Then she looked up at George again.

“And yet you are altered in appearance,” she said, coolly comparing the portrait in her hand with the original. “You are much older-looking; you are darker, you are less handsome. In these things you have lost. What is it that you have gained?”

“A friend might hope, wisdom.”

“A friend! Yes, probably. I suppose you will hardly count me amongst your friends?”

“Then it is because you place yourself

outside," said George, feeling that there was truth in the thing he said. Even as he sat there he knew that he sat in the presence of a strong nature with all its best strength perverted, turned aside from all that was human and womanly, poisoned by vanity, warped by selfishness, paralyzed by one experience, the experience of an enervating, and blinding, and hardening prosperity. That there was humanity underneath, if it might but be reached, he was persuaded even yet. But he knew too well that he might never reach it; perhaps no merely human influence might avail. Still, it was not as if he confronted a stone, a thing that had no heart or soul. Then there would have been no hope. A remote and half-dead hope was better than none.

"You have given me credit for straightforwardness," he said; "let me continue to deserve it. I have failed in one errand that brought me here, and the failure is hard to bear—very hard, and very painful, when I think of the possible consequence. But it must pass, it seems, since nothing that I have urged has availed. . . . My other motive for

coming, as I have said, concerns the letter you wrote to me. I have erred; I have been unwise in that I took note of it at all. I do not wish to be rude, but I am feeling conscience-stricken as regards another just now. At the same time I trust I am capable of consideration for you. Will you be equally considerate toward me? Will you return to me the portrait you were looking at just now, with another which I think you have, and my letters? It is not too much to ask under the circumstances. It would have shown greater wisdom had I come to you long ago; I am bitterly conscious of that. But now that I have come, you will hardly refuse me. And, of course, you will understand that it is not the portraits that I care for, nor even the satisfaction of receiving my letters, but all that your act of returning these things will include.”

“You would then feel quite free?” Miss Richmond asked quietly.

“I should feel quite free, and I should feel that you had withdrawn the threats you used.”

“Those threats disturbed you?”

George’s heart sank within him.

“They could hardly do less than that,” he said with a smile that was not quite free from bitterness.

There was another pause. Miss Richmond turned her head a little, so that she looked into the fire. The expression on her face was the expression of a woman quiet, pleased, gratified. It was hardly a smile that was playing about her lips; but it was certainly a look of placid, pleasurable expectancy.

“It seems a very small thing, this that you ask,” she said, musingly.

“It is very small.”

“And yet it implies so much!”

“What exactly does it imply to you?” George asked, as if with a new grasp on the matter.

Diana smiled, a smile that showed full appreciation of the import of the question. Then the smile died from her face quite suddenly.

“I do not know all that it might imply,” she said. “Life is so complicated. Nothing turns as one would wish it to turn. Things have the very contrary effect to that one intends them to have.”

“There is much truth in that,” George replied, imagining again that he had perceived some tone of relenting in her voice. “The only safeguard one has is to live one’s own life as simply as may be, and not to dare to try the effect of design upon the events of other lives.”

Diana looked up at George musingly.

“The old habit!” she said. “Preaching at me, and preaching impossibilities. But tell me what you meant just now when you said that you repented not having come sooner? What difference can it have made to you, since you admit that you are engaged to Miss Bartholomew?”

George hesitated a moment. Let the issue of this interview be as it might there should be explanation between himself and Genevieve that evening; and before he slept Bartholomew himself should be told all. This being firmly settled it could hardly be very necessary for him to be guarded in this conversation with Miss Richmond. Perhaps frankness might have an influence that caution would fail to have; and frankness was always easy; while caution in the exactly

right degree was often an extremely difficult thing.

So it was that George Kirkoswald came to tell the story of the past six months of silence, of suffering, of suspense, to Diana Richmond. He hardly mentioned Genevieve's name. "It has been as if no word had ever been said between us," George declared, "and I have left her to judge of my conduct as she chose, knowing that she could never judge uncharitably of any human being."

Miss Richmond listened very quietly, very attentively. Was there any compunction in her at all when George told her of the shock, the stun, that her letter had given him—coming, as it had done, into the day that was to have been one of the happiest days of his life? Did she perceive any desire to be honourable, to be patient, to do well and wisely in his long restraint, his long waiting for some light to show him the next step onward? "I have seen so many lives, so many causes, wrecked by impatience," he continued, "that I set myself at all costs to wait, to do nothing that I should afterwards repent of having done. But, as I have said,

I repent now of the thing that has seemed to me a virtue. You remember that day when I spoke to you in Soulsgrif Bight? I should have come to you again at a more suitable moment. . . . But regret is idle now. I have only to ask you to withdraw the letter you wrote to me, and to return mine. I think you will not refuse me now."

Diana looked up with one of her most expressive looks on her face.

"And if I do refuse?" she said.

"Then I must tell you clearly and plainly that it will make no difference in my deed. I shall explain everything to Miss Bartholomew, and to her father, and abide by the result."

With an exquisite grace of movement Miss Richmond rose and crossed the room. There was a davenport near the window which she unlocked, taking from it a packet of letters. Her diamond rings flashed, her dress rustled imposingly as she came back. George saw at a glance that they were his own letters that she had in her hand. He had prevailed. He sat down again quite silent in his relief, his satisfaction.

Another brief moment, and his emotion rose up tremulously. Miss Richmond had taken out two letters from the rest, and unfolded them. To his great dismay she began reading some passages aloud.

“ Believe me, my own queen, when I say that my love for you is as changeless as my love of life itself, and far more sweet to me,” she read in low, soft tones. “ The days when I do not see you are dead, empty, divided days. When I am with you, holding your hand in mine, feeling secure of ‘ the crown and comfort of my life, your favour,’ then, and then only, do I live any real life. Apart from you I have no vitality. All my old interests are dead, utterly dead. I cannot even take up the old books; if I do I find nothing in them. Do what I may—

‘ Only I discern  
Infinite passion, and the pain  
Of finite hearts that yearn.’ ”

Kirkoswald’s pale lips parted :—

“ Will you not spare me?” he asked hoarsely. “ This can do no good.”

“ I only wished to remind you that I have some ground to stand upon,” said Miss Richmond, speaking in the same gentle tones.

“And you mean to stand upon it?”

“I do.”

Kirkoswald rose to his feet. “Then it will be better that I should say no more. . . . But let me ask you one thing. Will you tell me what is your motive for all this? I do not deceive myself for one moment by supposing that you still care for me.”

“Then it will hardly trouble you if I tell you that I never did really care for you. I did not always know it; but I know it now.”

“Then why—why, since you never cared for me enough to have suffered yourself from any deed of mine, why should you take pleasure in making me suffer? I cannot understand it. What is your motive? What do you wish to do? What do you wish me to do?”

“I wish you to go and explain to Miss Bartholomew.”

“Then assuredly you will have your wish!” said George, offering his hand, and saying “good day” with something that it would be an understatement to call decision of manner.

\* \* \* \* \*

Miss Richmond remained standing for a moment or two after Kirkoswald had left the house. Her white hands were clasped lightly, her eyes half-closed, her brows knitted as if in perplexity. This was an expression seen on her face but rarely. Diana Richmond was seldom perplexed.

“So far I am foiled again,” she said, speaking half aloud. “Are they fools, all of them, that they will not see?” . . . Then, while she still stood quietly there, the drawing-room door was thrown wide open again. A tall, white, fur-clad figure entered with a fine grace of bearing and movement, and bringing an element of some strong half-spiritual emotion into the atmosphere. “Miss Bartholomew,” said Kindle, in his most pompous manner. Then he closed the door. The two women were left facing each other, greeting each other with smiles, and quiet, graceful courtesies.

## CHAPTER VI.

“AND TO MAKE IDOLS, AND TO FIND THEM  
CLAY.”

“ Yet God thee save, and may'st thou have  
A lady to thy mind,  
More woman-proud and half as true  
As one thou leav'st behind !  
And God me take with HIM to dwell—  
For HIM I cannot love too well,  
As I have loved my kind.”

MRS. BROWNING.

THE quietness at Netherbank had not been broken during the two days which had passed since George Kirkoswald's offer of intervention. When the evening of the next day closed in, the day on which George had found the drawing-room at Yarrell full of people, Noel Bartholomew had betrayed a little expectancy, a little eagerness. Genevieve had opened the piano; she had filled

the big china bowl with fresh green moss, scarlet holly-berries, pale gold chestnut leaves. There were some ferns in a tall vase; some rare engravings on the small table-easel. A friend of Genevieve's, Mrs. Winterford, had sent her some photographs from Venice; they had only come by post that morning, and they were lying on the table, waiting to be talked over, admired. . . . Was it because no one came to admire them that the evening seemed so long, and that the quiet of it grew to be oppressive?

"I hope Mrs. Warburton has not telegraphed for Mr. Kirkoswald again," Genevieve said, gathering up the engravings and putting them back into the portfolio. The remembrance of the previous evening was in her eyes, it had been there all day, filling them with the glad, tender light of hope; it lay under the white lids like a shadow now. It was after nine o'clock. There was no longer any probability that George would come down from Usselby. The old look of weariness had taken the place of the expectancy that had been visible on Bartholomew's face all the afternoon.

"No," he said in answer to Genevieve's remarks, "no, it is not that. It is nothing so painless as that. He is delaying to come, because coming can only be painful. I wish he knew that I am prepared!"

Next morning brought a little hopefulness, as morning almost always does; but as the day wore on it died down again, dying into perplexity, into some inevitable soreness of heart. It was nothing to Kirkoswald; at any rate, it was very little. The man was busied with his own affairs; his free, fine outdoor life lifted him up above the small strains and stresses of ordinary existence. It was not to be expected of him that he could understand that great and sudden quietness which had come down into the little sitting-room at the mere offer he had made. . . . Then all at once Bartholomew turned round upon himself with blame and contempt and self-reproach. He was undeserving of that last and best good, a true, unswerving, and loyal friend.

The night had been a sleepless one for him; his heavy eyes, his wan thin face, told of an ever-increasing sleeplessness. And

sleep during the day was impossible to him ; nevertheless, he consented to go and lie down for awhile, if Genevieve would be obedient, and consent to go for a walk. Then if Kirkoswald came, or Dr. Armitage, Bartholomew would be there to receive them.

Genevieve went out reluctantly. It was just after their early dinner. The day was cold and uninviting ; the land looked dreary ; the long reedy marsh stretched darkly away round the curve of the upland. She had put on her long paletot of warm white fur, and her little oval white fur hat, yet she could hardly help shivering at first as she met the keen breeze that was coming up from the north, sweeping over the bent and broken sedges that were grouped so gracefully together in the standing pools. A few lean startled yearlings looked up with wondering brown eyes as she passed ; the water-wagtails went skimming about. A blackbird was thrusting his yellow bill into a tempting scarlet rose-hip.

Genevieve had less mind than usual for these things to-day. The worn hopelessness of her father's face haunted her as she went

by field and farm ; the wrong, the oppression he was enduring, came back upon her with an almost overwhelming sense of its strangeness, its incomprehensibleness. A dozen words, if they might but be spoken, would at least make things straight and plain. If circumstance remained hard and bitter, it would surely be better to bear, being understood. Then a great desire came upon her strongly and suddenly. She was not so far from Birk-rigg Gill now. Why should she not pass through it, go up to Yarrell Croft, and speak with Miss Richmond face to face about this unprecedented thing herself ?

The girl stood still a moment, turning from white to crimson in the working of her own strong emotion. She remembered that George Kirkoswald had undertaken to act as mediator ; but it was not impossible that he had failed, as her father feared ? "I can find out if he has failed, or if he has succeeded ; and either way I can do no harm by calling," Genevieve said to herself. "I am not afraid of Miss Richmond ; she has always been courteous to me ; sometimes she has been kind ; and, though I do not under-

stand her, I have always felt as if I wanted to understand her. I will go now. I will certainly go. It may be that I shall say nothing when I get there ; but I will go and find if there is anything to be said."

Her purpose gathered strength as she went on ; and her impulse seemed no longer an impulse, but a sane and sensible measure, which she ought to have thought of much sooner. It seemed to her eminently probable that ten minutes of simple and kindly and straightforward conversation would explain everything, bring everything to a peaceful and satisfactory conclusion.

So it was that less than a quarter of an hour after George Kirkoswald had left the drawing-room at Yarrell Croft, Genevieve Bartholomew entered, with her strong purpose, her yearning human lovingkindness, written plainly on her face. Miss Richmond's eyes were radiant with the unexpected satisfaction.

"This is really kind of you, to come so far to see me on such a dull day," she said, with quiet cordiality. "Come nearer to the fire ; take the chair that George has just

left. . . . You would meet him?" she said, with studied indifference. "He has just gone."

"Mr. Kirkoswald! No; I did not meet him," Genevieve said, changing colour, in spite of all effort. Then she paused awhile. When she spoke again there was a new calmness on her face. "Let me be candid, since you thank me for coming," she said. "Perhaps if I had met Mr. Kirkoswald I should not have come. I think his errand and mine would be the same."

"His errand!" Miss Richmond exclaimed, looking up as if she were rather at a loss. "Oh! you are alluding to the little affair between your father and Cecil." Then, with an exquisite turn of her shapely head, Miss Richmond let her eye fall upon the velvet-covered table that was between Miss Bartholomew and herself. Genevieve's eye naturally followed hers. The morocco case, with George Kirkoswald's photograph, was lying there open; the letter that Diana had read aloud was open also, and close to Genevieve. The merest glance at that distinctive handwriting was enough. Two

small heaps of letters were carelessly spread out behind.

“ Do you think that a good likeness ? ” Miss Richmond said, handing the case to Genevieve. It was a little foreign case, with pockets for cartes-de-visite.

“ I do not know if it is good,” Genevieve said simply. There was a mist before her eyes. It was not the mist of tears, and it passed away in a moment or two. “ I hardly know if it is good,” she repeated. “ It seems to have been taken some time ago, when Mr. Kirkoswald was young.”

“ When he was young ! ” exclaimed Miss Richmond, laughing a low, cool, deliberate laugh. “ Oh, that *is* good ! I must tell him that ! . . . It was taken a month after we were engaged. There are two others in the pocket which he had taken afterwards in Paris. I do not like them. You can look at them if you care to do so. I never care to look at photographs myself. They either tell one nothing, or something that is not true. If I had seen George’s photographs before I saw himself I should never have cared for him. There is such a look

of sternness, one might almost call it hardness, about his mouth when it comes to be photographed ; and a certain expression, half-disdainful, half what I call consequential, which he undoubtedly has sometimes, but very seldom. Why should it always come out in a photograph ? ”

Was Miss Richmond soliloquizing in mercy, in malevolence, in utter indifference ? Genevieve did not know. Had something struck her ? wounded her, taken her strength ? Was she blinded ? Had some sudden madness touched her brain, filling her soul with a sickening, crushing, cruel delusion ?

She rose to her feet, white, pallid as the garment she wore. Her great dark violet eyes were dilated till they seemed as if they saw nothing. She stood there tall, and still, and stricken.

“ It is true, this you say ? ” she asked, speaking in a strange, quiet, yet bewildered undertone.

Miss Richmond rose, too ; for the moment she was half-alarmed, and she stood there asking herself what was the worst, the utmost

thing she had said. . . . That utmost thing was true, true to the last letter; and she said so, regretfully, as if the thing gave her pain in the utterance.

Genevieve grasped the back of her chair. She was still standing, still pale and motionless. She had no power to move. She was not thinking; she was only trying to stand strong and firm for the moment, without losing consciousness, without betraying herself. She hardly knew that her wide beautiful eyes were slowly filling with tears; she made no effort to check them. Her lip quivered with the word that came.

“ You know that I am hurt ? ” she said, in a simple, childlike way, speaking as if in the sudden stun she were moved to turn for sympathy to the hand that had dealt the blow.

Miss Richmond made no reply. She, too, was pale, and there was a look of controlled disquietude on her face. The strife of good and ill was strong within her at that moment. She had been prepared for the infliction of pain when the moment came, but not for such a manifestation of pain as this.

Genevieve was still standing before her, the tears still in her eyes, as if the chill of her heart had frozen them there for ever.

She was looking through her tears, beyond them, beyond the purple hills that bounded the horizon. Was she trying to look beyond and behind this hour that had so surely struck its darkness through the hours to be?

“I must go,” she said, turning to Miss Richmond, and speaking as one who comes slowly back again to a life that has been suspended; “I must go to my father.”

She went out almost silently, hardly knowing the way she took. The great gates clanged into their places again; some sheep were bleating rather piteously on the moorland above. A big brown retriever came out from among the bushes, and looked up into the sad human eyes that were passing by as if he divined all the sadness, and all its meaning; but the girl took no notice of him. She noted nothing. She went hurrying on.

Five minutes after she had left the drawing-room at Yarrell, Miss Richmond sent Kindle out to find her, to bring her back; he was to desire her earnestly to come back for

a moment or two. But Kendle was unable to overtake Miss Bartholomew. The man imagined that she had gone by the moor ; but she was nowhere on the upland. She had gone homeward as she had come, by the dead, dark, marshy reeds.

All the way she went by the dark marshes. The wintry twilight was coming down quickly, icily. A lurid crimson flush was fading in the west. The trees stood still, the withered drooping sedges were still ; the birds were silent. One great pale star stood shining in the lonely heavens.

Presently she came to a road that crossed her path, a road that led down from Usselby into Soulsgrif Bight. Once, not so long ago, she had been passing through the marsh in the early morning, singing as she went out of the gladness, the lightness, the fulness of her heart, making for herself a little tune to the words that were ringing in her ears :—

“ I must not scorn myself, he loves me still ;  
Let no one dream but that he loves me still.”

Surely it was but yesterday ! She had been singing aloud, freely, gladly, unrestrainedly. Then, suddenly, at the turn of the road she

had met a tall, stern figure close at hand. He had heard, that was evident; and the gay glad song of assurance had turned to a silent and painful blush of maiden shame.

Surely it was but yesterday! And now? . . . Now the girl stood by a stunted black-thorn bush and held it so that the thorns passed into her hand till the pain was greater than she could bear. So she kept back the tears that would have betrayed her soul's anguish to her father.

Then, again, she went rapidly on by the dim ways; and as she went there came to her, like an echo from afar, some words that Canon Gabriel had spoken one evening to the people in the music-room at Soulsgrif Bight. He had been speaking of St. Peter, of his attempt to walk on the waves to his Master, walking as on the earth till he had looked round upon the wild waters that were raging on every side. Then his faith had failed. Had he looked steadfastly at the Master only, he had never felt himself beginning to sink.

It was so in many a crisis, the Canon had gone on to say in simple words. A man's

sole chance of outliving the storm might lie in his ability to look above and beyond the terrible stress of it. . . . The truth, the help of this came mercifully just now when it was wanted. She would not look, she would not think, not yet, not till strength came for looking and thinking. . . . Would it ever come? A chill, sighing gust of wind came up from the sea through the gathering darkness; it went away up to the moor, carrying with it a half-uttered cry, "Will it ever come? Will it ever come? Will there ever again be any life to be lived with desire for life's continuance?"

She reached the stile at Netherbank at last. Mr. Severne was just coming away from the cottage. He stopped for a moment, half-surprised, wholly pleased.

"I beg pardon, but I don't think you ought to be out so late on these cold evenings," he said, when his greeting was done, speaking kindly, tenderly as a brother might.

"Do you care?" Genevieve replied, speaking in strange new tones, tones that were a little excited, a little wild. "Do you care, do you still care? I wonder that you should."

care so long. But, perhaps, it is only seeming, only mockery. I could understand that. I cannot understand in any other way.”

Mr. Severne could hardly see her face in the darkness; but he could not fail to recognize some change, some development of life’s fitful fever. Was it her father’s trouble that was trying her thus?

“What makes you suspect me of insincerity?” he asked, speaking gently, yet breathing more quickly under the intensity of his own emotion.

“I don’t suspect you more than others. I don’t suspect anybody. It is not suspicion; it is knowledge, new knowledge of the world, of life, of all things—the good glad life that I have so delighted in, the beautiful world that I have loved so keenly. Oh! try to see it—try to see it for what it is! Believe certainly that it—

‘Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,  
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help from pain.’

But, there, I am preaching to you, when you should be preaching to me. Come and preach to me, but not to-morrow, not for a long time; not for a long, long time. Then

come and say something to help me, come and say anything you will."

She discerned the change in Mr. Severne's voice when he spoke again, the intonation of disappointment.

"I am not to come to Netherbank at present?" he asked.

"Come in the morning," Genevieve said, still speaking as if she hardly knew the thing she uttered. "Come and try to make me good as you are; help me to bear trouble as you bear it. Be my brother, and be very wise, and be very patient, and be good to me —oh! be good to me! There is no one else—my father must not know. There is no one else who may see me weak, and wilful, and overpowered in the fight as you may."

There was a pause. A good many thoughts were passing through Mr. Severne's brain; and if there was effort in the next remark he made there was for him no irrelevancy.

"Perhaps I ought to have told you before that Mr. Kirkoswald is with your father," he said, as if the remembrance had just struck him.

"He is there now? Good-bye, then.

And come again when you care to come.  
And when you come, be true! be true! If  
the world may have one true thing in it, oh!  
be true! ”

Genevieve went swiftly across the stubble-field. There were lights in the cottage windows, the ivy dropped in long clustering sprays; the birds flew out tremulously. The one lonely star was still shining; an unspoken cry went far beyond it, a cry for help in the sore strife—only for help that she might not fail, help that she might be strong for the moment, help that she might not betray herself in the presence of him who had betrayed her life's whole faith, its utmost trust, its last bound and possibility of love. “Help for a little while!” she said, “and then, then I will lie still. All my life long I shall need only to be still . . . still between dawn and dark, still between dark and dawn . . . nothing can break the stillness.”

## CHAPTER VII.

## A FIRESIDE SCENE.

“Courage, my soul!  
Play thou the heroine’s part for one half-hour  
And ever after take thy woman’s way.”

*Philip Van Artevelde.*

GENEVIEVE went into the little lamplit sitting-room. Her father was there, leaning forward in his chair in the old wearied way. George rose quickly to place another chair for her. Then all at once with a great rush there came back upon her brain the reasons she had had for going to Yarrell Croft, the weeks of pain, the unanswered letters, the returned pictures. Was it possible that she had forgotten—even for an instant? When she realized that for nearly two hours she had never once thought of all this strange trouble that had fallen into

her father's life, her forgetfulness, her seeming selfishness smote her like a treachery ; and the fact that she had been preoccupied became a motive for such strong self-blame that her mind was for a moment drawn away from the thing that had caused preoccupation.

She sat there quite still, quite silent, while George told of the unsuccessfulness of his visit. He did not go into details or repeat Miss Richmond's words. He confined himself almost entirely to an admission of the fact that he had failed in his enterprise, and to a few remarks expressive of surprise at his failure. As he spoke he was watching Genevieve with even more than usual intentness, and with some concern. He had detected the change that a few hours had written on her face.

Her father's eyes were not undiscerning. "Change your dress, dear, and be as quick as you can—tea will be here in ten minutes. Then I shall scold you ; and after that I shall make out a list of distances which you may not pass. You are exhausted. I can see that plainly."

In a very few minutes Genevieve came

down. She was passing into another mood now. There was a calmer and stronger look on her face, a look as when one recognizes a new condition of things that changes all the old for ever ; and, though she was still pale, her paleness was not pallor, as it had been. She had put on a pink dress, rather a gayer dress than she would have chosen to wear under the thatched roof if her store had not been getting low ; but she had chosen it to please her father—partly to please him, and partly for that inscrutable reason which not even a woman can define, but which is nevertheless existent ; a reason that makes itself felt most decisively in the negations of an absolute poverty. *Sartor Resartus*, and modern æstheticism notwithstanding, the “Clothes-philosophy” is as far from being understood as ever.

A woman does not need to understand it ; it is enough for her, and often more than enough, that she has clear instincts. Genevieve’s own instincts were very clear, but she did not always obey them, and they were used to being thwarted. The fact that she was unusually well-dressed this evening was

supporting rather than annoying, as under other circumstances it might have been. She had brushed her yellow rippling hair into a more careless and artistic arrangement; her deep, dark eyes were bright, and expressive of new and inexplicable meanings. Her gracious and graceful ways were filled with a new intensity. Every moment seemed to be a moment of fuller life—fuller meaning than the last. It was as if you could hear the life of the hour as the flame of existence went upward.

“And now tell me where you have been this afternoon?” her father said, when Keturah had finally disappeared. “The scolding I promised you shall remain in abeyance since you do not seem to be the worse for your four-hours’ walk. . . . You have been listening to Wilfred Stuart’s violin, of that I feel assured. You look as if you were listening to it yet.”

“Will you ask him to come and play for me to-morrow?”

“Then you have not been there?”

“No; I have not been there. . . . *I have been to Yarrell Croft.*”

There was a noticeable silence ; each man had his fears.

“ You are a very curious child,” said Bartholomew presently. He looked up with a grave look on his face as he spoke. “ Now and then I feel moved to a fresh thankfulness that you are so good. If you had not been good you would have been——”

“ Very bad ? ”

“ No ; but very troublesome, because so incalculable. I never seem to know what you will do next.”

“ Do you ever fear ? ”

“ No ; I do not need to fear. . . . But all the same, tell me what took you to Yarrell Croft ? ”

“ An impulse.”

“ That, of course ; and the impulse concerned the pictures ; that, of course, also. How long had Mr. Kirkoswald been gone when you got there ? ”

“ About a quarter of an hour,” said Genevieve, looking up at George with a direct and unflinching gaze, which he perceived to be not without bitterness, not without sadness, not without a consummate disdain. It was

only a look, but an entire revelation was in it. He knew now that there was nothing left to be revealed by him. Was his cup full at last?

“I need hardly ask any more questions,” Bartholomew said, clasping his hands wearily on the arm of his chair. “If you had had any message of peace you would not have kept it till now. . . . Let the matter drop, then; let us be for this one night as if it did not exist. . . . Perhaps I have been foolish—stupid. I think I feel a little as if my brain were overgrown by the mosses of Murk-Marishes.”

“Would it enliven your brain if you were to go and have a cigar in the kitchen, father? Think how long it is since Keturah has had the pleasure of your company—and your smoke; and remember how she delights in the latter.”

“Which you do not?”

“Not indoors; but out of doors, as you know, I can endure to any extent.”

“I perceive you wish me to go.”

“Which does credit to the acuteness of a moss-grown perception.”

Bartholomew went away, wondering not a

little; but there was no wonder working in George Kirkoswald's brain. He was standing near the fire, resting one arm on the edge of the mantel-shelf. His face was calm, and somewhat pale; his deep-set eyes were filled with heaviness, and pain, and perplexity. He lifted them as Genevieve came and stood before him. He was intensely conscious of the soft sweep of her dress, the droop of her shining hair, of the new tenseness of her every movement.

“ Will you not sit down ? ” he said, placing her chair nearer the fire.

“ No, thank you; I will stand,” she replied, clasping her hands with an apparent lightness, and letting them fall before her. “ It will not be for long. I have only a few words to say, and I perceive that it will be less difficult to say them than I had anticipated. . . . You are prepared for them ? ”

She spoke without bitterness, without hardness; but the effort she used was apparent in every breath she drew—in every intonation of every word. At the last she had almost failed in her utterance, yet she looked into the face before her coldly and steadily.

“ I am not prepared for anything,” George replied, speaking with an emotion almost as evident as her own. “ I have been trying to prepare myself, but I have failed. . . . Of course, I know what it is that you want to say. You have learnt from Miss Richmond that once—some years ago—I was engaged to her. . . . I can only hope that she has told you the whole of the matter; not a part only. . . . And since you have heard her version of it, you will hardly refuse to hear mine; that is, so much of it as I can tell you ? ”

Genevieve stood listening to him, pale, patient, courteous.

“ Pardon me ! I have not heard Miss Richmond’s version of the matter,” she said, speaking with dignity. “ And I would prefer not to hear yours. I should be glad — it would be a relief to me—if I might know no more than I know now. No peace could come of it. There could only be confusion, perplexity. Forgive me for saying that I have had enough of these.”

George stood looking silently into the fire for a few moments. Then he lifted his face and spoke again.

“It would be a pity if misunderstanding should deepen between us for the need of a few words,” he said. “And since I know that I have been to blame, since my error has struck me in a way I never expected it to strike, you will let me speak for myself. A criminal may do that.”

He went on to speak; he told the story of his life’s mistake as it had repeated itself to him on that day when he had received Diana Richmond’s letter. Then he spoke of the letter itself, and of all that had happened since; of his own silence, his own suffering, his own suspense; last of all, of his own love—his passionate, yearning, unresting love.

“Such love is not so common in the world,” he said, “that a man or woman should trifle with it when it is given. You shall find a thousand lives that are being lived out to the last without once for one hour having been uplifted by such love as mine is for you. I have been to blame, but it is not until one has erred, and deeply, that one finds—

‘The want of one kind heart  
To love what’s well, and to forgive what’s ill  
In us.’

And you must see that my error has been of the understanding. Is a man wholly responsible for the woven, tangled web he calls his life? But responsible or not, will you not take my life as it is?" the man said with a great tenderness breathing across his words. " Will you not take it as it is with all its past mistakes, its present imperfections? Will such a love as mine cover nothing? I tell you truly I have never loved before; not with any love of heart to heart, of soul to soul, of spirit to spirit. There is another love, which is of the senses wholly, and that love I have known; but I tell you in sorrow that I have known it only to wonder at it, to be perplexed, appalled by its unsatisfyingness, its incapacity to afford a man's soul one hour of any true rest or peace. Having known it thus, could I fail to know the higher love when it came? could I fail to bend before it in reverence—in a great and solemn and glad gratitude? My life since I have known you has been what it never was before, what it can never be again, if this day's event has wrought any change in a love I trusted would never change while life should last."

So he pled ; but even as he spoke his heart failed him, and a cruel burning flush of pain came over his face as he noted the still resolute look on the face before him. Was it possible that now, when explanation had been made, when all was confessed—repented of, when there was no longer any mystery, any doubt, any hindrance, was it possible that now he should find that he had touched the end—the end of his life's last hope and its best ? This could not be : he went on pleading. Had he no perception of the fact that his persistence at that moment was a mistake ?

Did no voice whisper to him that Genevieve was still suffering under the first shock of finding suddenly that he had loved another—loved passionately, and with duration in his passion, for so Miss Richmond had implied in that quietly-uttered admission of hers ?

Blow upon blow had fallen. Genevieve did not doubt anything he said now, but he had not denied aught that Diana Richmond had said ; he had merely added further facts. It was true that he had loved her—that he had loved her long ; and his love had changed, had died out utterly, leaving him capable of

loving again with equal strength, equal passion—why not equal mutability?

That he could change, that he could love now one woman and now another, was not a thing that a nature like Genevieve Bartholomew's could recognize with light equanimity.

“I do not doubt one word that you have said,” she replied in answer to a question he had asked. She was still trying to speak quietly, dispassionately; but she felt that her quietness was turning to stoniness by reason of the force it needed. “I do not doubt you,” she said, “and I do not blame you. I blame no one but myself.”

“Then, since you do not doubt me, what is it that is to come between us now?”

“I am hoping that nothing need come between us,” Genevieve replied, lifting her beautiful face and raising her eyes to his, so that he could not fail to see the large sincerity written there. “That was why I asked my father to leave me for awhile, that I might ask you to be to him all that you have ever been—a friend, a strength, a satisfaction. It may not be for long—I hope it will not. I mean to try to persuade him to leave this

neighbourhood as soon as may be. Meanwhile will you come as usual? I ask it as a favour. Another thing that I would ask is, that you should say nothing to him of what has happened to-day."

Kirkoswald could not mistake her meaning. Why would he not accept her proposition, or at least seem to accept it? Why, since he had waited so long, could he not set himself to wait and to watch for a little longer?

"I could not do what you ask," he said, his voice faltering and breaking as he spoke. "I have not strength enough for that. . . . Genevieve, have you forgotten? . . . Did I not tell you, did I not warn you, that your faith in me might be tried to the uttermost? It has been tried to the uttermost, I know. . . ."

"And beyond," said Genevieve, with trembling, vibrating tones in her decisive words. "Beyond the uttermost; and it endured to the last. . . . Is it my doing that it has been suddenly struck dead?"

"And your love with it?"

"And my love with it."

There was a long silence in the little room. George turned and buried his face in his

hands. The fire burnt low; the lamp was dim. Genevieve still stood by the table, growing paler and paler; feeling the gulf growing wider and wider. It had widened with every wild unwilling word she had uttered; yet it was as if every sentence impelled her to the utterance of another that should be more final, more determined, more pitiless than the last. What was it that had come upon her? What strange perversity? What unprecedented and wayward inexorableness? Had George turned at that moment, had he taken her hand in his and drawn her to his side with tender force, he had met with little resistance.

Her love dead! It had never yearned and trembled toward him so passionately, so fervidly, as it did at that moment. Had it not been for that word that she had said she had fallen at his feet as he stood there, and she had cried aloud to him, and her cry had been for forgiveness.

He spoke again presently. The flush of pain had gone from his face; he was paler, stronger, calmer.

“Let me ask you one thing,” he said.

“Have you any fear now that Miss Richmond may carry out her threats? Do you dread that?”

Genevieve smiled. The question roused all the waywardness, the bitterness, in her again.

“Can you imagine it?” she said. “Can you ever imagine that I should dread anything Miss Richmond might choose to say? Is not my name as fair in the world’s ears as Diana Richmond’s name? Would not any word or deed of mine justify itself before men as readily as any word or deed of hers? Does one, then, live a blameless life for nothing? . . . I have never yet needed to dread the breath of slander and detraction; let me pray that I never shall!”

This was but an added sting. He might have known it all, he told himself; he might have trusted that so Genevieve Bartholomew would have met any possibility of being misunderstood. Having nothing to risk, nothing to dread, she could not have met it otherwise. So he argued now, not forgetting that he had used another argument not so long ago. Still he had tried to do right. He could only say sadly, bitterly.

"I might have known it—I might have known it!"

"Yes; I think you might have known so much as that," Genevieve said with quivering lips. "Had I known how things were I might have asked that you should have had faith in me."

"I had faith in you. My error arose out of my not perceiving that a ten times larger faith would not have been misplaced," George said, speaking with a new and more vehement earnestness. "I perceived later. What I did not know then I know now. I know it now; and you say that it is too late. . . . But you will unsay it—you will unsay that one word. Let all else stand if you will, but not that; do not say that you cannot forgive—that you cannot forget. . . . You say that your love for me is dead; that cannot be—it cannot be. It may seem so to you, but it cannot be so. No true love dies, not here nor otherwhere. . . . Tell me, Genevieve, tell me that it was your pain—the pain I had caused you, that stung you into saying that."

He had come a little nearer to her as he spoke; his eyes were lifted to hers, intense

with yearning, with wistfulness, with an infinite humility. His lip trembled as he said the last sentence, which was so directly and closely near to the truth that Genevieve's eyes quivered under her eyelids as she heard it. Yet still the day's pain was upon her ; it had struck through her whole being, warping her mental fibre, turning her from her better and truer, her wiser and tenderer self. When she saw a hand held out to take hers—held out in loving beseechingness, she lifted her eyes from it to George's face with something of disdain. Was it disdain ? Could it have been aught else ? Could it have been fear, for instance—fear of love's strong domination ? George did not ask. Wounded, pierced to the very heart of him, he drew back.

“ I will urge you no more,” he said,  
And the reply came swiftly—  
“ Then I thank you.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

“ IS ALL OUR FIRE OF SHIPWRECK WOOD ? ”

“ Dearest, three months ago  
When we loved each other so,  
Lived and loved the same,  
Till an evening came  
When a shaft from the devil’s bow  
Pierced to our ingle-glow,  
And the friends were friend and foe ! ”

R. BROWNING.

CONTINUALLY, and through all other sounds, Dr. Armitage’s words were repeating themselves in Genevieve’s hearing. “ Keep your father from mental disquiet,” he had said ; but it was not easy now to discern how far Noel Bartholomew might be suffering from disquietude. With every fresh turn of thought or event, it seemed to his daughter as if some noticeable degree of anxiety slipped away

from him ; leaving him, not himself as she had known him of late, but a more tranquil and less sensitive self. He was not apathetic, but he was unconcerned, and his manner was as the manner of one freed from care for evermore.

All the evening, after George Kirkoswald went away, Genevieve set herself to the perfecting of a finer sympathy between her own mood and her father's. This was what was left to her ; and she knew it, and was not unthankful.

“ Then nothing passed between you and Miss Richmond about the pictures ? ” Bartholomew asked when they had been sitting alone awhile.

“ Nothing. When I knew that Mr. Kirkoswald had been there I did not say any more.”

“ That was wise.”

“ And you have made up your mind to see Mr. Montacute ? ”

“ Yes : I am going over to Thirkeld Abbas to-morrow.”

“ To-morrow, my father ! Think of Dr. Armitage ! He entreated you to be careful for a little while.”

“I am very careful. . . . I know what he meant ; he meant that I was to keep quiet. I could hardly be quieter than I am ; and I think this affair cannot harm me further. I don’t know that I feel resigned, but I feel curiously regardless. . . . I shall simply take Montacute’s advice, whatever it may be. I shall leave the thing in his hands entirely. Nothing could be less exciting.”

This seemed eminently reasonable ; and her father’s manner was so full of a new composure that she felt its influence upon herself through all the wild tumult that was surging within her. Though she sat there so calm, her heart was crying loudly. It was strange that any one could be quite near and not hear its crying.

It was Genevieve’s doing that they sat so late. She worked awhile at her embroidery, talking all the time, thinking, suffering all the time ; stitching down wild tender words with the pale silk that made the rose-petals, sending long leaf-lances charged with bitter repentance all across the dark gold ground. All her life through that piece of handiwork would stand for so many hours of restrained

agony, of brave successful effort to smile, and talk, and read, and sing, as if no great darkness had come down to mar and cloud her life, while life should remain. The singing was hardest of all, but her father asked it of her, and she would not refuse him aught that might be done. It was no matter for the cost of the doing. Sing me *Robin Adair*, Bartholomew said, and though every word struck through her brain with the sharpness of steel, she sang it to the end.

“ Where's all the joy and mirth  
Made this town a heaven on earth?  
Oh, they're all fled with thee,  
Robin Adair! ”

Her voice thrilled on, clear, sweet, penetrating; full of passion as of pathos. It was the song that George had liked best of all her songs, and the one she had liked best to sing to him. Was it possible that she would never sing it to him any more? Would no kind night-wind carry the words up the sloping fields, and away across Langbarugh Moor to Usselby? The wind had done so much as that for Wilfrid Stuart; and the boy's path had been by still waters ever since. Might it not

be again ? Might it not so happen that George should be out on the moor—what so likely ? and might not words of such pain and intensity reach even to him ? “ Listen, listen,” she was saying underneath ; “ listen.”

“ What, when the play was o'er,  
What made my heart so sore?  
Oh, it was parting with  
Robin Adair.”

Then she went on—

“ But now thou'rt cold to me,  
Robin Adair.”

Cold ! he had been cold many a time, cold, and strange, and absent, and incomprehensible. And she had loved him through it all ; and the coldness had been hardly a pain because of the faith and understanding that she had brought to meet it. . . . “ Oh, if he would but come back again, and be *only* cold to me ! ” the girl said, clasping her hands tightly together when the last chord was touched.

It was nearly midnight before she was alone in her own little room under the thatch. She moved about quietly for awhile, till her father should be asleep, throwing her pink

dress aside, wrapping herself in a white dressing-gown.

“Anon she shook her head,  
And showered the rippled ringlets to her knee.”

Would she ever take any pleasure in her golden hair again, since he who had so praised it would have no praise for her any more? That was his own word. “Never any more.” Ah, why had she led him to say it? Why had she driven him to say it? What dark spirit of cruelty had entered into her to tempt her from herself, to tempt her from her love?

“My love that I said was dead!” she cried, in a subdued whisper, standing with clasped hands, in the moonlight that came streaming through the window in the roof. “I said that it was dead, George; but I said it with lips that were cold and chill for the untruth they said. Forgive it, forgive it! It was my first untruth: it shall be the last. Come back and say that you forgive it; or come and say that you will not forgive it, that you will hold me in disdain for it always. Only come back again! Only come back again! You may look down on me, and scorn

me, and be hard to me ; you may crush me with a word, with a frown ; you may strike me with that quick strong glance of yours, but never leave me. . . . George, George, George ! how could you leave me ? ”

A long time she stood there ; she could hear the faint gusty sighing of the wind as it came up out of the sea ; she could hear the long low ceaseless roll of the waves at the foot of the cliffs. Nothing had changed. Nothing was as it had been before. Was she passing through some kind of dream or trance ? Was it all a delusion that had been sent to her to test her strength ? Would she wake up to-morrow, and find that she had had a vision in the night, a vision of darkness, of pain, of love’s bereavement ; a vision sent to witness to the value and meaning of love ? To-morrow ! It was to-morrow now ; it was to-day ; it was yesterday ! There was no more any division of time ; there was nothing but—

“ One long dreary everlasting *now* ! ”

to be lived as human life may be lived when the wheel is broken at the cistern ; to be lived mutely, and desolately, yet always

enduringly. That alone was left to be attained, a strong, silent, passionate endurance ; acceptance of a life that no man nor woman might henceforth comprehend, that none might dare or care to comprehend. . . . This, then, was the thing that human beings called loneliness, one where two had been ; a thick darkness where had been a great tender light ; a coldness where had been a fervid, tremulous, palpitating warmth of love and life. This, then, was the dreaded thing that men named loneliness !

And again her wild cry was straitened to a whisper, as it went upward in the night.

“ George, George, George ! how could you leave me—how could you leave me to one lonely hour ? Life had no loneliness when it was one with your life. Though you never came I was not alone. I could speak to you ; and I knew that you heard though you were leagues away. Now you hear no longer, for the spiritual ties are broken—broken by harsh words, and angry ; and you cannot hear across the discords that sever your soul from mine. Words ! What are they that they sever so ? But you will hear words of mine no

longer. I alone can hear. I alone can hear the useless thing I say. It cannot reach you where you are, for the strings are snapped, the strings on which your soul’s music swept to mine, mine to yours. Yet let me say it again ; let me say it once again : George, George, George ! how could you leave me ? How could you leave me to the madness of a love like mine ? ”

The winter night was half gone before she threw herself, wearied and exhausted, on the little white bed, over which the moonbeams were sinking slowly to the floor. The sound of the first cock-crow came from the farm on the hillside. Another day had begun. Was she glad ? No, nor sorry. The days might come and go, the years might come and go, but they might no more bring any gladness to a human heart that nothing could make glad. The sun would shine again, what would the sunshine be like now ? Would it have joy in it ? Would it have sadness ? . . . The waning descending moon was better, the sighing wind from the sea was better, the restful darkness that came into the little room was better. . . . By-and-by there came quiet,

but it was quiet that had no peace in it, no true usefulness; and there was silence, but the silence was broken by murmured words. "Him or death, death or him," the girl said wearily, speaking in the sleep that is death's twin sister. Then she moved a little, and her lips parted yet again, saying sadly, "Death or him!"

## CHAPTER IX.

“I HAVE MORE CARE TO STAY THAN WILL  
TO GO.”

“ Peace breathes along the shade  
Of every hill ;  
The tree-tops of the glade  
Are hush'd and still ;  
All woodland murmurs cease,  
The birds to rest within the brake are gone.  
Be patient, weary heart—anon  
Thou, too, shalt be at peace ! ”

GOETHE.

COULD it really be said that Genevieve wakened to her sorrow when the morning came ? Had she slept ? Is it sleep to lie conscious of pain — conscious with a benumbed yet intense consciousness that cannot strive nor cry, that cannot gauge the depth of one's anguish, that cannot turn from it, that cannot bring one thought to

alleviate it ; that can only lie stirless, helpless, confused with all hurrying irrelevant confusions, tortured and exhausted by all dark and impossible complications. . . . Is this to sleep ?

If it be not sleep, neither is it waking. Dreams come, lights and shadows fall, voices cry out of the darkness, figures flit to and fro. The dream-world is as the waking world. One wild disquiet pervades and dominates them both.

There was a new tenderness in Genevieve's manner when she came downstairs. He was there then, her father ! He was not lying prostrate on some dark plain as she had seen him in the night. He was there, and he was speaking, smiling quietly ; he was not silent, with his face downward upon his arm. Ah, how she had striven in her unrestful sleep to raise that grey fallen head ! Her arm was yet aching with her striving, aching as if it would ache for evermore with the vain effort. She might well stroke the grey hair lovingly, and kiss the pale lips tenderly. He was there. Though all else was gone, she had her father.

It was a wild, bleak morning. Dark rain-clouds were moving heavily above the moorland ridge. Though you had no sadness of your own, the sadness that was upon the land was sufficient for depression, discouragement, unhopefulness of heart. The very struggling and tossing of the bare boughs against the sky gave you a sense of desolation—of wild, imploring desolation, that might not be comforted nor stayed till the wind, having done its worst, went down. It would surely go down, that rough north wind that came from the sea. Would the wilder wind of sorrow go down when its work was done?

What would be left when it had gone down?

A fallen tree with its branch yet green?

A ship on its first voyage, stranded on a rock in mid-ocean?

A human heart wounded, to be healed no more till its beating had done?

The grey morning went on silently, sunlessly. "I shall not go over to Thirkeld Abbas till the postman has been," Bartholomew had said. The coming of the mild,

pleasant little man who brought the letters was an agitation now, and the sight of an envelope in his hand a reason for painful nervous excitement.

He had only one letter this morning. It was for Genevieve, and it was from her friend and godmother, Mrs. Winterford, the lady who had sent the photographs from Venice. She was coming home, she said; and she wanted Genevieve to go to her for a few weeks if it were possible.

“At any rate you will come to me for Christmas, dear,” Mrs. Winterford said. “I know your father will spare you if he can. He will remember that I have never spent a Christmas alone at Havilands yet. I consider it my duty to be there; but I do not like to think of being there with no one to help to cheer me, to keep me up to my responsibilities. You will come, dear? I need not tempt you with a description of packages of *bric-à-brac* to be unpacked and delighted in. It is for my sake you will come. It is for your own sake that I want to have you.”

Genevieve gave the letter to her father silently, and he read it in silence.

"You must not refuse this, Genevieve, dear," he said unhesitatingly.

"I must go to Havilands, and leave you here alone?"

"No; I will go with you as far as London, and remain there till you are ready to come back; then we will come back together."

A great sadness came down suddenly into the girl's face, a great weariness into eyes that had been weary before. This was no time to urge the plan that she had had in her brain last night, to explain her desire that they might leave the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes as soon as it was possible to leave it, and come back to it no more, neither together nor apart. Had she desired it? Did she desire it now? Was not the sigh that she checked almost a gasp, almost a sob, a stifled protest against the idea of leaving Netherbank for one hour of one day?

Her first impulse—she had all but acted upon it—was to put her hand gently, entreatingly upon her father's arm, to say, "I cannot go to Havilands. I cannot go away from here. You will not insist, you will

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yield this once, you will be good and kind to me as you have always been, you will not ask me to go away?"

Then, glancing at the white weary face, remembering all the strain, the fret, the pressure of the life he had lived of late, that he was living now, her heart smote her with her own selfishness. What could be better than that he should go for awhile? Even to have some change, some stir to look forward to, would be good for him and right for him. What was there in her own life that she should think or care for the comings or the goings of it? Havilands or Netherbank, what did it matter, since one step would be upon the corn-field no more? So she asked herself, straining her ear intently for the step that might fall there at any moment.

But it did not fall. Her listening was in vain. Her yearning, beating, impassioned heart might as well have been still. If any other heart was beating in response, there was Langbarugh Moor, frowning darkly between; and the black stony upland was a small barrier to that raised by one false forbidding glance.

Only a glance; only one cold word following the glance, and that word—

"Not from the heart beneath—  
'Twas a bubble born of breath,  
Neither sneer nor vaunt,  
Nor reproach nor taunt;"

yet potent for ill as is the keen sword-edge that divides life from life in some unlooked-for moment.

"We will go if you wish it, father," Genevieve said; "but I need not write to-day. We will talk over it in the evening, and the letter can be written to-morrow. Perhaps when you have seen Mr. Montacute you will know better when you would wish to go."

"I should not wish to go till nearer Christmas," Bartholomew said. "This matter will be settled by that time, and the C<sup>E</sup>none will be finished. It is because of my sorrowful and forsaken C<sup>E</sup>none that I wish to go to London."

The lone C<sup>E</sup>none! Genevieve had half-forgotten the sweet, complaining, disconsolate figure that was down there in the closed studio. Was it only four days since it had been closed? It was like four weeks, or four

months. There was a hush upon the place. The gloom that had fallen there was not uplifted.

Genevieve went in; then she stood for awhile, silently watching the wind-riven clouds, the bare tossing branches, but not thinking of them. She was thinking of nothing. The strange chill, the strange quiet in a place where there had been so much warmth, so much life, so much love; where glance had answered glance, flashing a life's devotion across the fireside; where words had been spoken that seemed to germinate on the moment; where silences had passed surcharged with meanings of more imperative power than any that eloquence had created; the hush, the emptiness coming after these was like the dropping of thick darkness that could be felt into the middle of a sunny summer's day. Life itself seemed arrested. The thing that had been an ecstasy was reduced to a drear repentance.

It was easy to understand the Oenone now. Genevieve stood before the canvas with a new appreciation, a new reverence. The sorrow of the white-robed maiden, who stood

there amid the wandering ivy and the vine,  
was no more an overdrawn and incompre-  
hensible sorrow. "I know now," Genevieve  
said, speaking half-audibly, as people do  
speak in the extremes of life, "I know now  
what moved you to cry to those far Ionian  
hills, to cry aloud—

'O happy Heaven, how canst thou see my face?  
O happy earth, how canst thou bear my weight?  
O death, death, death, thou ever floating cloud,  
There are enough unhappy on this earth!  
Pass by the happy souls, that love to live:  
I pray thee pass before my light of life,  
And shadow all my soul, that I may die.'

But I would not die, no, I would not die;  
nor would I care to sing so, to 'build up all  
my sorrow with my song,' unless I knew  
that my song might reach and touch him who  
made the sorrow. . . . Did he make it?  
. . . Was it his doing? Was it mine? Is  
there any undoing? . . . George, George!  
if I built up my sorrow, if I built it into  
poem, or picture, or book, and if it made  
you see, then would you relent? Would  
you unsay that word? Would you come  
back and hold out your hand to me again  
with that tender look on your face, and that

greater tenderness in your voice, that was there only yesterday? . . . But I may not do it. I have no art nor talent to use for winning you back. I have only love, only a true, strong love. You said certainly that love that is true does not die here nor other-where; then why leave a living love like mine to live on for ever in pain? You had wounded me—you or another. You had hurt me, and crushed me, and in my agony I cried out; but you might have known that I cried untruly, as men have done on torture wheels not worse than mine. Now that I recall the thing I said, is it possible that you will not hear me? Is it too late? Are you hardening yourself in your pride? Is that look growing on your face that *she* spoke of yesterday, speaking as one who had full right to speak, to speak admiringly or slightingly, as a woman may when she is sure. Ah, how it struck me, and crushed me! . . . And yet, yet you will not understand; I feel and know in my heart that you will not understand—

‘And from that time to this I am alone  
And I shall be alone until I die,’

because you will not understand. It is oppressing me more with every hour that goes by, the feeling that you will not stoop again to put your hand in mine, to look into my eyes and see there that the bitterness born of a moment's delirium has gone for ever."

While Genevieve was thinking, striving, passing from suffering to suffering, her father was going slowly by field and road to Thurkeld Abbas, missing Mr. Severne, who was going to Netherbank by the way. No agitations beset Bartholomew as he went; the grey day did not sadden him; the tossing trees awoke no chord of desolateness in his heart or brain. He was quiet. "I am quieter than I remember to have been these twenty years," he said to himself as he went, feeling that it was a somewhat curious effect for so tumultuous a trouble to have wrought. Altogether, things were strange—strange but not unpleasant, not unsatisfactory in a certain sense. "If the day were fine, I should be fancying myself young again," he went on. The strain of living seemed relaxed within him. He was conscious again of that feeling to which he could give no name. Was it content, a

grey, placid content? Whatever it was, it was not pain, nor dread. "Perhaps it is a kind of foretaste of the mood that old age will bring," he continued. "It is only fair that age should bring back some of the satisfactions of youth; and there is no greater satisfaction than a permanent tranquillity."

It was in this mood that he entered the house beyond the church where Mr. Montacute lived and had his office, if such it might be termed. With a somewhat rare abnegation the grim oppressiveness of an ordinary lawyer's office had been softened away. There was an inner room beyond a round-topped arch, and whether or no the usual tin boxes and red-tape tied parcels might lie beyond the heavy curtains that fell to the floor, no uninitiated man or woman might guess; but no such evidence of a large and aristocratic practice obtruded themselves upon his clients' sight. The outer room might have been described as a library. There were bookcases in it, and an old-fashioned comfortable sofa or two between the writing-tables. The windows were curtained, the floors were carpeted, the walls were not destitute of

pictures. You sat down with a sigh of relief from any nervous tremors that might have taken possession of your soul as you went up the somewhat gloomy stair.

Mr. Montacute was an old man, probably nearer seventy than sixty now. He was tall, slim, erect, white-haired, not unimposing. An accident had deprived him of the sight of one of his eyes, and he was learned enough to tell you—

"In what Greek or Latin name  
The visual nerve was withered to the root,"

though but little perceptible change had come upon "the unspotted crystal." It was the right eye. You noticed the difference, a want of expression; and Mr. Montacute was careful always to seat himself so that the expressionless eye was nearest to you. By so doing he gained an air of imperturbability that would have been priceless to some men. He remembered Bartholomew distinctly; indeed, he slightly resented the idea that forgetfulness had been possible.

"I seldom forgot a name; I never forgot a face," said the old man, with considerable dignity of tone and manner. Then he sat

down in a very upright chair, and listened to all that Bartholomew had to say. Now and then he interrupted the artist to ask a question, but very seldom. He was evidently gathering up his mind to precisely the same conclusion as other people had gathered theirs. The pictures had not been approved. "It is an awkward affair," he said, keeping the imperturbable side of his face toward Bartholomew, "and, pardon me, I must say that I think you were careless in the first instance. You should undoubtedly have made some more definite agreement."

"I perceive that now," replied the artist quietly. "But I can only say for myself that I have not been accustomed to make binding agreements. I have received many commissions. Nine times out of ten people have named a price which they did not wish me to exceed. I need hardly say that in no case have I ever touched the extreme limit, however narrow that limit might be. When no price was fixed, I have understood that it was immaterial."

"I should say that it was quite immaterial in this case," rejoined Mr. Montacute.

"Then what should you consider to be Mr. Richmond's motive for the course he has taken?"

"Ah! there I cannot answer you," said the old man, turning his expressive eye searchingly upon the painter. "There I cannot answer; but I should have thought that you would have arrived at some conclusion yourself on that point."

Bartholomew was silent. He had arrived at nothing that would bear the definiteness of words. Was his hope failing him a little? Was this professional questioning, this cautious answering, quite what he expected? What had he expected? He hardly knew. He was beginning to wish that he had not come, that he had set himself to bear his wrong, not seeking such redress as might or might not be found in English law or equity.

"You perceive, doubtless, that it is an affair that may be looked at from two points of view?" Mr. Montacute began again in his serene, formal way.

"I should say that it might be looked at from twenty points of view," Bartholomew said, speaking the impatient words without

impatience of manner. "Every one who looks at it at all will do so from the little corner where he stands. I wanted to know how it seemed to you ; and I think I perceive how it seems."

It was seeming different to the artist himself now. The colour and turn of the lawyer's mind struck upon his own receptiveness darkly. He had been a fool ; and his rectitude not above suspicion : that was how the matter stood now in this absence of sympathetic insight, in this presence of legal impassibility.

"It would be easy for me to say how I look upon the affair," Mr. Montacute replied, speaking with more consciousness of a wide and exact vocabulary than desire to conciliate a client. "If, as it seems, you want my advice, I can give it briefly. Let conciliatory measures be tried. If you like I will write to Mr. Richmond, proposing an interview between him and myself."

"I should wish to leave the thing entirely in your hands, if you will have it so left."

"Then certainly you may leave it, and I will do the best I can," said Mr. Montacute

with a sudden graciousness of manner, and assuredly he could be gracious when he chose. "I will see Mr. Richmond, and you may expect to hear from me in a few days," he added, turning his expressive eye upon the artist as he rose to go, with a greater amicableness in it than before. Yet there was no assurance for Bartholomew to take away with him, no sense of any vital human helpfulness, of any desire to avert or assuage suffering. A coldly negative conduct of the matter to some end that should seem fitting in Mr. Montacute's sight was all that he need expect.

Noel Bartholomew went home as he had come, quietly, composedly ; but the lightness, the hopefulness, had gone from his quiet. Had he hoped more than he knew, that he should thus be so near to disappointment ?

It was only some two hours past noon, but over in the west there was already a look of evening. The wind drove the clouds aside, gleams of wild, flitting sunlight shot through, bringing out the colours of the grey upland, the reds and yellows of the fractured scaurs on the moorland edge, the dark-green whin-brakes, the grey-white sheep, the verdant ivy

that clung to the stems of the sparse trees. The smoke of the turf-fire up at Hunsgarth Haggs was curling against a mass of blue-black clouds. A horseman was coming down the road, but the dappled grey was not Kirkoswald's. A moment later, Bartholomew perceived that it was Ishmael Crudas who was coming down from the Haggs ; and he waited at the stile to pass a word or two with Miss Craven's faithful and patient admirer.

“Noo ; what Ah's glad to see ya oot ageän !” shouted Mr. Crudas heartily, and with considerable satisfaction in his tone. He was dismounting, fastening his horse to the post at the side of the stile. “Ah's comin' in,” he said. “That is if ya've neä objections ?”

Bartholomew smiled his disclaim of objections. “We shall be glad to see you. Come in and have some dinner. My daughter will be delighted.”

“Dinner !” exclaimed Mr. Crudas shrilly. “Why, Ah's about ready for my tea. I allus gets my dinner atween eleven an' twelve. An' Ah's ready for 't an' all, Ah can tell you. When ya've had yer breäk'ast by five o'clock,

a twelve-o'clock dinner comes neän ower sharp upon ya."

"I should say not, indeed," replied Bartholomew, opening the cottage door and leading the way into the little room, where the table was set in the dainty fashion observed at Netherbank.

Many a long day after that Mr. Crudas told of his amaze at finding a dinner-table decorated with "a few bessy-bairnworts,\* and cattijugs,† stuck into a bit o' moss; an' all manner o' bits o' breckon an' green ivin i' lang narra glasses i'steäd o' tumblers o' good yall."

There was a jug of mild ale on the table which Mr. Crudas was asked to accept for his refreshment. Genevieve poured some out for him.

"Thank ya, miss," he said. Then he put down his empty glass. "Despert poor stuff," he remarked, with cool surprise. "I isn't goin' to stop," he went on, turning to Bartholomew. "Ah nobbut com' in to ask a bit o' favour o' ya. Ah want a pictur'

\* Bessy-bairnworts = daisies.

† Cattijugs = rose-hips.

painted to hing up, ya knew; to hing i' t' parlour, if ya think ya could make a bit o' tahme to deä ma one. . . . What saäy ya?"

"I shall be very glad," said Bartholomew, restraining his smiles, feeling in the heart of him that this new commission was an expression of sympathy under the mischances wrought by the old; and, perhaps, also a delicate way of offering practical help in a moment that he knew only too well was understood everywhere to be a somewhat critical moment for himself and his daughter. "I should be glad to paint a picture for you," Noel Bartholomew said, speaking quite truthfully. "What sort of pictures do you care for most? Have you anything in your mind's eye that you could describe to me?"

"Ay, Ah can see 't as well as if 'twas deän. Ah want ya to paint me an' t' beäst—t' Kessenmas beäst 'at Ah's fattenin'. An' a beauty he is, as fine as owt i' t' three Ridin's. Ah just want ya to take him as he stands, an' me wi' my hand upon him; an' when ya've painted him ya sall hev as fine a cut ov his sirloin for yer Kessenmas dinner as iver ya sat doon teä. An' as for t' price o' t' thing,

it's neither here nor there. . . . Noo: what saäy ya ?”

It must certainly be admitted that poor Bartholomew was a little at a loss to know what to say.

“ I am very sorry,” he began, “ but do you know that I have never painted an animal in my life, not even in my landscape pictures? Animal painting is, as it were, a separate branch of art, and requires a special training.”

“ You deän't saäy so ?” said Mr. Crudas, evidently much disappointed. “ Noo, Ah thowt you were up te onything. Ah *sud* ha' liked yon beäst to hing up i' t' parlour.”

“ Have it photographed,” suggested Bartholomew.

“ Naäy: Ah care nougħt aboot them things. Ah like a bit o' culler. But what isn't to be, isn't, seä they saäy.”

“ You wouldn't care for a portrait of yourself without the animal ?”

“ Yis, Ah *sud*,” replied Mr. Crudas, brightening in a rather wonderful way. “ Yis, Ah *sud* like to ha' mysel' painted vary weel. There's woss-like folks aboot, Ah reckon. An' there's Dorothy. Noo, Dorothy wad mak'

a viewsome pictur'. Paint her an' all if she'll let ya. Mebbe she weänt. She's as awk'ard as owt. She wants you to be talkin' tiv her ageän, Miss Bartholomew. She was as different as could be, one bit; an' 'twas your doin', Ah know; an' Ah got started wi' wall-papers an' things doon at Swarthcliff, an' all was gettin' smartened up nicely. But Ah've no heart to go on wi' sike things noo. . . . An' it's nowt but pride on her; it's been nowt but pride all through."

This was true, and Genevieve admitted as much; but even pride was easier to understand now; all things that might come in the way of a true and faithful and yearning love were easier to understand.

"It was not so much any word of mine that influenced Miss Craven," Genevieve said. "Circumstance did more to incline her toward yielding than I did. If she were more prosperous, she would be less reluctant."

"Accordin' to mah waäy o' seein' things her troubles sud make her all the readier to gi' waäy. What for need *she* be frightened o' what folks says? If she cared for me as much as Ah care for her, she'd let 'em talk

till they were tired, an' then begin again.  
Her Sunday clothes 'ud fit no worse, Ah  
warrant ya."

Having given his commissions, and ar-  
ranged about coming to sit for his portrait,  
Mr. Crudas went away. It was easy to see  
that he was not ill-pleased with himself and  
his idea. He went along the field-path  
swinging his arms, whistling a while, then  
singing as he went. It was a verse of the  
old song that he sang always.

" He turned his face unto the wa',  
And death was with him dealin';  
Adieu, adieu, my dear friends a',  
And be kind to Barbara Allan."

## CHAPTER X.

“I KNOW THE TRACES OF THE ANCIENT  
FLAME.”

“I said we were to part, but she said nothing.  
There was no discord, it was music ceased.”

P. J. BAILEY, *Festus*.

THAT infinite need of the soul, which is love, is an elemental force which may awaken and develop under very varying conditions of intercourse.

The love of Dante for Beatrice will, to all time, stand as typical of the highest human love. It was a passionate love—passionate enough to yield rapture and ecstasy “to the utmost limit of beatitude.” And it was faithful—faithful even unto death.

Yet, so far as may be discerned, “Beatrice never so much as knew of the pure, lofty, ideal love she had inspired.”

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Does it need always the imagination of a Dante to enable a man or woman to worship for a whole life long in silence, in patience, in a spiritual, immaterial consciousness of the finest and most far-reaching sympathy?

A whole life long! ay, and beyond that. Though one may be gone by that grave which is the gate of Heaven, the one that is left may live on in a faithful, pure, exalted communion that it might have been less easy to establish permanently between two souls burdened and clouded by the intervention of material association.

Love that is truly love is spiritual affinity, puissant, dominating, serenely satisfying.

"So, though this alone were left to me, there need not be despair," George Kirkoswald said to himself, walking upon the cliffs by the grey, illimitable sea. "Though this alone—a lifelong unspoken devotion—were left, it would be better than the arid blankness that was before.

'I feel it when I sorrow most,  
'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all.'

There need not be despair," he said, know-

ing within himself that his despairing mood was passing on into some mood less wildly intolerable.

Only a few days had gone by—a few dark corroding days of isolation, of failure of heart, of crushing desolateness. This was the first day of anything that could be termed rebound; the first day of reawakened hopefulness. George did not know it for hopefulness. It seemed no more than resignation.

He had not forgotten Genevieve's request—not for a moment had he forgotten it. In making it she had made an acknowledgment that was priceless to him now.

"Be to him what you have always been—a friend, a strength, a satisfaction," she had said; and the words removed from their context were of an abiding value.

"If I may be her father's friend, it can hardly be that she will count me her own enemy," he said, with a feeling akin to contentment.

Nevertheless, the first moment of meeting had little of contentment in it. The December twilight was coming down; Genevieve sat

alone in the little sitting-room by a bright pinewood fire. She was lying wearily in her father's chair; the Prince was chirping fitfully; the yellow rose-tree was dropping its petals; the clock was ticking with audible monotony.

She knew the footstep, the knock upon the door. Her heart which had been beating so faintly stood still.

“I am sorry my father is out,” she said, standing there tall and straight, and beautiful and cold. “But he will not be long. He has only gone down to the village to see a poor man who is ill. If you can wait a little it will be pleasure to him to find you here.”

Though he knew her so well, he was yet half amazed at the strength-in-weakness that was so visible in her voice and manner. And he perceived for himself that the half of her strength was the strength that is always in truth. It was indeed of her father that she was thinking.

“Certainly I will wait,” George Kirkoswald said, seating himself in the chair she had indicated in her graceful, courteous way. “I was wanting to see you. Severne tells

me that the Canon wishes to have the next concert in the schoolroom at Murk-Marishes. I suppose it will be well to have one there now and again ? ”

“ Yes : I think so,” Genevieve answered, speaking without embarrassment or difficulty. She had on an old dress of pale grey-green cashmere : her little coral necklace was about her throat ; her soft yellow hair shone in the flickering firelight. “ I think it will be well to attempt some kind of entertainment there,” she said. “ The room is small and shabby and depressing in the extreme ; but there are old people and invalids in Murk-Marishes who cannot get down to Soulsgrif Bight. We should think of these a little.”

She spoke as if there were nothing else to be spoken of, or thought of ; as if the village concert had been the uppermost thing in her mind, as if neither day nor night had brought any regret, any pain.

That serene philosophic look was still upon George’s face, and Genevieve saw it there. His voice too was quiet, composed, dispassionate.

“ Do you suppose that the people really

care much for the entertainments ? ” he asked, speaking as men speak of things that are far from them at the moment.

“ I believe they care more than we can ever know, or imagine, or believe,” Genevieve replied, with an energy that was perhaps above the occasion. “ A concert is something that they look forward to, and look back upon in a way that is touching in the extreme. I never hoped to come so near to them as a verse of a song has brought me.”

There was a pause.

“ May I ask which of your songs it is that they care for especially ? ” George asked, repressing all sign of interest, and betraying an involuntary hardness in his effort.

“ It is ‘ *The Land o’ the Leal*,’ Genevieve replied ; her voice faltered a little as she said the words. “ They understand that . . .

‘ There’s nae sorrow there, Jean,  
There’s neither cold nor care, Jean ;  
The day is aye fair  
In the land of the leal.’

That covers their view of the hereafter ; and it is sufficient for many of them. It seemed rather pitiable at first ; now I am glad when

a woman reminds me, with patient face and tearful eyes, that after a little while there will be neither cold nor hunger, nor any care."

There was another pause—an interval lying between many things that might have been. Love, passionate love, that might have been one, was there divided. Recollection came across all emotion, and pride, and pain; striking, chilling, condemning.

The coldness of manner that comes of an exceeding great pain is a more severe coldness than any you shall find. The look on George Kirkoswald's face seemed an utterly ruthless look to the eyes that watched him. The blank pitilessness of it struck upon the girl's heart like a chill. An icy wind often gives strength to the fainting.

"Shall you come to the concert?" she asked, looking up at him with a look as calm as his own, and speaking in a voice free from any tremor of expectancy.

"No," was the reply, made with an apparently studious carelessness. "No; I am thinking of going to Cairo."

It was twilight: he could not see the sudden pallor, the sudden look, as of one

stricken afresh, that came into the girl's face. He could not gauge the silence to its last depth. One word of hers—one brief, sweet cry of pain, and he had been at her feet, craving forgiveness there, entreating passionately that she would resist the deathless love that was in him no more. Why did he wait for the cry, for the word, since he could only feel that the breathless silence was full of cries? Was he remembering that word of his own, “I will urge you no more”? Was it her reply that was ringing in his ears so wildly, “Then I thank you”?

The silence was broken by other sounds: there were noises outside in the twilight. Bartholomew had met Canon Gabriel by the sick-bed in the village; Sir Galahad had failed to come for him at the time he had promised to come, so a message had been left—Mr. Severne was to bring the trap up to Netherbank. The Canon had been persuaded to come back with Bartholomew for a cup of tea.

“I expect you to make me a cup of very good tea,” said the old man, taking Genevieve's hands in both his own, and looking

tenderly into her pale face. Keturah had brought in the lamp, and was bustling in and out with the tea-cups. Bartholomew and George were talking by the fire. Opportunity was gone. Life was overpowering, and strangely confusing.

## CHAPTER XI.

“ LATE, LATE, SO LATE !

“ The artist draws from all things their essence ; he feels on his nerves moved like an *Æolian* harp, the electric spark before it bursts in the air ; and in his heart, open to all feelings, the shock of social sufferings before humanity itself quakes under them ; and in his mind, disturbed by continuous creation, he feels thoughts yet unborn in the soul of the universe.”—SEÑOR CASTELAR.

“ YES, I am thinking of taking a holiday,” Kirkoswald was saying. “ It must seem very absurd of you to hear me say so ; but I am feeling tired, very tired. For some days past life has seemed almost burdensome because of the very weariness of living it. I suppose it is the dull December skies coming after the dull November fogs.”

“ A clear frosty morning would change

your plans then, I hope," Bartholomew replied. Genevieve was pouring out tea; the Canon was by her side.

"Is this your father's cup?" George said, coming up to her and looking into the still white face with some compassion, some surprise.

"It would probably take something more than a frosty morning to make me change my plans," he said, answering Bartholomew; "but of course they are not unalterable. . . . Sometimes I wish that I had been a little less master of my own fate," he added in a grave, wearied way.

"I have often found that feeling," said the Canon. "I have often found that the man who is free looks upon the man who is bound hand and foot with something like envy. . . . It is not incomprehensible. The man who is bound is usually bound to something that is to him a motive and a purpose in life."

"And is therefore in possession of one of Heaven's best gifts—if indeed it be not the best gift of all," said George. "I agree with Carlyle that there is 'folly in that impossible precept, *Know thyself*, till it be translated into

that partially possible one, *Know what thou canst work at’!*”

“And are you wishing to impress us with the idea that your life is an idle one?” asked Canon Gabriel, who had met Kirkoswald in the by-ways of life rather frequently during the past ten days.

“No, I am not idle; happily for myself, or unhappily, I am constitutionally incapable of actual do-nothingness. But that is not the thing I mean. The man I envy is the man whose whole soul is absorbed in the idea that he has a work to do here on this earth, and that he cannot die till he has ‘done it. That man has something to live for. The ordinary cares and pains and disappointments of life hardly touch him except when they touch his life-work. And if Fate beat him off from it for awhile, he comes back to it with his immense and vital energy bent upon it with force increased a thousandfold.”

“How many men have you found living so?” asked the Canon.

“How many? I cannot tell you. One does not always recognize them. They have no time to sound their trumpet in the market-

place, and the market-place knows nothing of them as a rule."

There was a brief pause. The pinewood fire crackled cheerily, the canary stirred in his cage and gave a little chirp. Genevieve sat by her father's chair, silent, pale; that great stillness was yet upon her face.

"Have you nothing to say to all this?" asked Canon Gabriel, coming a little nearer to where she sat, and looking into her face anxiously, wonderingly.

"No," she said, "I have nothing to say. Some women are intrusted with a message of their own to deliver—some few, not happy women for the most part, I should infer, except they be happy in the utterance given them. For the rest, we are contented, or ought to be, if we may but minister to one to whom a clear message has been given."

Her father lifted his face slowly as she spoke: there was a new depth, a new solemnity in it.

"Are you thinking of me?" he asked. "Are you speaking of me as of one to whom a clear message has been given? . . . Then let me speak the truth—it will do me good

to speak it, since the knowledge of it is a burden. I have been asking, praying, that a message from God might be given for me to deliver to my fellow-men from the day I first began to desire to work to good purpose until this day. Now, after thirty years of work I see that my prayer has not been answered.

“ You, who understand me, will not think I am speaking egotistically if I say that I believe that the gift that men call ‘genius’ has been mine. The man who possesses it can hardly be mistaken about his possession. If he speak of it in the world’s ears, his words are counted vanity. It is no more vanity to him than if he said, ‘ My hair is brown,’ or ‘ My eyes are black.’ He knows that he is no more to be credited with his genius than with his dark eyes. Yet to be conscious of the one is inevitable knowledge, to be conscious of the other is gross egotism.

“ I only admit my consciousness now that I may show you all my suffering, and that I may prove to you that I am not mistaken in my conclusions.

“ God gives genius. Carlyle’s definition

that 'genius is the clearer presence of God Most High in the soul of man' is the nearest and truest definition I have yet found."

"And it is the truest you will find," said Canon Gabriel, turning his pale fragile face toward Bartholomew, with a flush of fervour coming upon it even as he spoke. "There, it has always seemed to me, that the secret of that inspiration that men call creative power must for ever lie. A man's soul is a temple, a temple with an altar, and above that altar broods the dove of the Spirit of God. There, in that inner Spirit-temple, a man may listen for the still small voice whose lightest whisper may inspire, and in so listening alone can he come to know himself 'a sounding instrument,' struck and moved to sounding by Invisible Hands."

"He may listen," said Bartholomew, beginning to speak again in the same strangely solemn way, "or he may refuse to listen. If he refuse to listen there he may not hear that voice elsewhere, but though he refuse to hear he will yet not be in silence. There are other spirits, other voices, other inspirations. They seem identical. But presently, in con-

fusion and bewilderment of soul, the man finds himself possessed ; the light within him has become darkness, the ecstasy of reason superseded becomes the foolishness of reason vitiated. If any impulse come to his creative power at all, it comes fitfully and in doubt. It may rule him strongly, and impel him to create things fair in the sight of men, but in his own heart there will be the knowledge that his highest insight is baffled and outdone.

“I have the thought within me that a keener discipline of suffering in earlier life would have lifted me into higher regions of living and thinking, would have raised me above the desire for material comforts and surroundings, would have shown me that the only true beauty is spiritual beauty—such beauty as may so touch the chords of a man’s soul here in time that they shall vibrate on into eternity.

“Had I been stricken as others are stricken, with the intense consciousness that comes by experience of man’s inhumanity to man, then I had had a burden. I had cried aloud ; my message had been a passionate

demand for a wider and greater and grander humanity, a humanity that had not only drawn heart to heart, but had impelled each individual soul onward from human love to a closer and fuller understanding of that love which is divine.

“ The very elements of humanity have yet to be studied and acquired by the great majority of us who boast of the large outlines of our human culture.

“ Years ago I read a book, and one sentence in it made my heart leap within me. It was this :—

“ ‘ No man who loves his kind can in these days rest content with waiting as a servant upon human misery, when it is in so many cases possible to anticipate and avert it.’

“ Had I been in a sort of Rip Van Winkle sleep, and awakened upon a later era than my own ? Were there things going on all round me, outside my recognition, of which I was unaware ? Was it true that there was a new human alertness abroad, a new and more perfect charity, a new and diviner enthusiasm of compassion ? Was it true that the old Juggernaut wheels of selfish indiffer-

ence had ceased to roll on over the hungry, the naked, the sick of heart and soul ?

“ For days, nay weeks, I lived in a wondering hopefulness, trying to discern the signs of the altered times, lifting my face that I might catch some refreshing from the breath that had come from the four winds of heaven to breathe upon slain sympathies that they might live.

“ But, need I say it ? I watched to my own despair. I watched—need I tell you what I saw in my watching ? Need I show you the followers of the Man of Sorrows ; need I ask you to look at the disciples of Him who was scourged, crowned with thorns, and nailed to a bitter cross ?

“ I watched and I saw in my watching streets of palaces in the towns, and over the country stately palaces in stateliest isolation everywhere. And I knew the life of the people who lived in these. And as I watched in my awakened eagerness there came a voice across the centuries speaking sadly, wearily :—

“ ‘ *The Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head !* ’

“ In the streets, in the shops of jewellers and dealers in luxury of all kinds, places that were crowded with rank and fashion, and beauty and indifference, and strength and selfishness, I heard above all other sounds that same voice speaking—speaking solemnly, commandingly :—

“ *Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and come and follow Me.*”

“ Crowding after these—the richest, the highest of the land—I saw the millions who follow on behind them as closely as they may, struggling each one to get nearer and yet nearer to some ever-advancing standard of living. Success led but to desire for success. There was no time, no thought left for other desires. Their life of hurry, of restlessness, seemed but as one long fever. Fever is pain, pain is sacrifice, but to whom do men offer this sacrifice of the best they have to give ? To Him who spent whole long nights on the solitary mountain-top alone with His Father ?—or to the Moloch of modern luxury, whose reward is a vengeance unknown to blinded eyes, undreamt of by hearts hardened by softness of living.

“ And again as I watched there came that voice above the world’s wild din :—

“ *When thou makest a feast, call the poor, for they cannot recompense thee : thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection.* ”

“ The poor ! Could it be that there were any poor left in the land ?

“ Then I turned in my watching, and I saw the homes where live the hunger-stricken who hide their hunger and their half-nakedness in silence and in shame. There I found the widow with her white face marred with weeping, worn with alternations of hoping and despairing, with her fatherless children born but to cry for bread, and to die needing it. There I found sickness left unvisited, old age left unsolaced, sin left unwarned, patient long-suffering left unrecognized, strong pure hopes left to wither and die in despair, great efforts left to fail for the need of a helping hand, talent left in a painful and useless obscurity for the lack of ground whereon to stand, and genius itself left to hurl its natural scorn in the face of a hard and careless world steeped to the lips in its own refined sensualities. All this I saw, and again as I

turned that piercing voice came thrilling passionately in my ears :—

“ *Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me.*”

“ That was years ago. I turned from the sight, from the sound, but I did not turn from it the same man.

“ Only to-day have I realized the meaning of all I saw, of all I heard ; only to-day, when hard experience has touched me with her icy finger.

“ Now, if any art of mine might ever speak again, its message would be clear—at the least it would be clear. And till the day of my death it would have but one burden, and that burden would be an appeal to man for man his brother, a plea that Christian charity might have reconsideration, a cry that the vast aggregate resources of a mighty nation might be brought to bear upon that nation’s still existing wants and wrongs and miseries and pains.”

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The low grave voice stopped. It was as if one near death had made a confession that

he had been greatly wanting to make. Genevieve had never heard her father speak of himself, of his own inner life, of his convictions or want of convictions, as he had spoken now. Even so far as the principles of his art went he had been wont to use a reserve that was almost silence ; and she knew that his best work had been the result of processes of thought well-nigh unconscious, and therefore inexplicable in words. She had thought of him as one without the analytic gift. He had lived by instinct, as it were, and now it seemed that his work had been done by instinct too. He had disclaimed the higher inspiration. Instinct might be pure and true, but it was not inspiration. His past career was not satisfactory now that he had come to look back upon it. Where exactly was he standing at present ? And now that light had come, where might he not stand in the future ? She was conscious of a new reverence—reverence for the man to be, even while she looked somewhat anxiously upon the man he was.

Mr. Severne came presently, bringing a quite new element into the thought-stilled

atmosphere. His boyish blushes and excuses were not unwelcome—they were never unwelcome at Netherbank.

“I had to go down into Soulsgrif, you know,” he said, “and my watch is wrong. It was thirteen minutes before the clock in the hall this morning, and the hall clock was seven minutes behind the church; and now look at it—it’s just a quarter to twelve! . . . What time is it really? Half-past six. Oh, I say!”

Mr. Severne drank a cup of cold tea, and ruined the wires of Prince Camaralzaman’s cage by trying to get a big piece of sugar in between; then he and the Canon went away. The dog-cart was standing near the stile, the stars were coming out, the wind had gone down.

“Are you going too?” Bartholomew asked of George, who seemed as if he were preparing to take his departure.

“Yes,” he said, “I think I’ve got a headache; but I don’t know, it’s so long since I had one.” He was looking at Genevieve as he spoke. The great stillness on her face had moved him, and she knew that he was

moved. His face faltered, the pitiless look had gone from his eyes.

“ When do you leave Usselby ? ” asked the artist. “ Have you any fixed time ? ”

“ No, it is not fixed exactly. I thought of going some time this week.”

“ Come down again before you leave us.”

There was a little silence : two glances met for a moment, one half sad, wholly wearied ; the other pleading and still.

“ Shall I come down again, Miss Bartholomew ? ”

And the answer came simply, yieldingly—

“ Yes, come to Netherbank again before you go away.”

## CHAPTER XII.

“WHAT I DID NOT WELL, I MEANT WELL.”

“ Who summoned these cold faces that begun  
To press on me and judge me? Though I stooped  
Shrinking, as from the soldiery a nun,  
They drew me forth, and spite of me . . . enough!  
These buy and sell our pictures, take and give,  
Count them for garniture and household-stuff.  
And where they live needs must our pictures live  
And see their faces, listen to their prate,  
Partakers of their daily pettiness,  
Discussed of, ‘This I love, or this I hate,  
This likes me more, and this affects me less !’  
Wherefore I choose my portion.”

ROBERT BROWNING, *Pictor Ignotus*.

No one could have written the letter that Mr. Montacute wrote to Bartholomew, except Mr. Montacute himself. As a piece of testimony to the truth that the style is of the man it was complete.

It was not a discourteous letter; even under provocation Mr. Montacute was rarely known to descend to anything that could be termed courtesy. He never forgot that he was a gentleman; his clients seldom forgot that he was also a lawyer.

“I have seen Mr. Richmond,” he wrote, “and I have also seen Miss Richmond; and having heard their version of the affair, I can only repeat more emphatically than before that the circumstances are difficult and embarrassing. There is no disposition on their part towards anything that could be spoken of as injustice. They are prepared to do all that they can reasonably be expected to do.

“Having given considerable thought to the matter, and hoping that if it can be arranged without further proceedings it may be more agreeable to you, I have suggested that the affair should be settled by arbitration. Mr. Richmond has consented to abide by the decision of any competent person. It remains for you to consent, or to refuse to consent, to this proposition.”

“Then assuredly I refuse,” said Bartholomew, speaking with ashy lips, as he put the

letter down. “ Arbitration ! Where will they find an artist who will agree to put a sunset sky into a scale, and determine its value in money by the uncertain and dubitable test of his own opinion, his own ability ? What man who had ever painted a picture himself would dream of attempting to put a market-price upon the painting of a group of Madonna lilies, if he knew that the man who had painted them had put his own price there. . . . No—assuredly no ! Let them do their worst. Again and again I say ‘ no ’ to that mode of chaffering over any work of mine ! ”

So he spoke in the first moment of surprise, and bitterness, and agitation—an agitation which was even greater than it seemed to be, and more exhausting. He had not expected that the man whom he had asked in all good faith to help him in his strait, would have contrived to make him feel that he, and he alone, had been to blame. Instead of helpfulness additional pain had come. Yet even now he could be thankful that he had not to bear his pain without companionship. His daughter sat beside him silently—silently.

soothing him, silently sympathizing. Not till the first burst of indignation was over did she venture any word of her own. That word was surprising when it did come.

“Give your consent, my father,” she said, stroking the thin nervous hand. “Give it at once, and unconditionally.”

Bartholomew looked into her face with astonishment.

“Can you quite understand the meaning of your advice?” he asked.

“I think I can. If you refuse, it will be said that you are afraid that your work will not stand the test.”

“No artistic work that ever was done would stand the chilling test of deliberate and intentional disparagement. Conscientious as those pictures are, there is an atmosphere about them already through which I cannot penetrate myself—an atmosphere of gloom, of heaviness. The charm of a picture, as of a poem, is too delicate a thing to bear the cold, shallow glance of a man prejudiced beforehand by the very circumstances under which he is requested to do his judging. Think of the fate of Keats’s ‘Endymion’ for

years after the *Edinburgh Review* had poured out its ‘shallow ribaldries’ upon the man; bidding him go back to his gallipots, since a starved apothecary was better than a starved poet,—not that I would presume to name my own name in the same breath with the name of Keats; but let your work stand on what level it may, the same rule holds good, the rule that one voice that blames has the strength of ten that praise—of ten? ay, of ten thousand!”

“But what of ten thousand, if there were so many in Murk-Marishes, what of them all to you?”

“I cannot explain all that it is to me,” said the artist, feeling very sore at heart under this new humiliation. But it was a humiliation that had to be drained to the dregs. He had to write his letter to Mr. Montacute—a stupid, blundering, self-betraying letter he made it. And finally he had to consent that the pictures should be taken to Mr. Montacute’s office to be weighed in the balances there by an artist who was to come from York for the purpose. Surely here at length was the last ingenuity of a pitiless fate.

When the pictures had gone, Bartholomew went into his studio again, and set his palette, and drew his *Enone* forward to the light. Genevieve wondered a little at the still resoluteness visible on his grey face. It was not his use and wont to begin working in a mood like this.

“Shall you make the alterations you once thought of making, father?”

“No, dear. I am only anxious now to get it done—this and the two others.”

“You will not take them with you to London?”

“No, I shall make arrangements for their being sent up afterward. . . . If it should be necessary for you to remember, I intend to send them to Messrs. Meyer and Calanson’s, in New Bond Street.”

There was a pause—it was only momentary, not long enough for the recognition of any feeling of chillness or dread.

“As if you were likely to forget!” Genevieve said lightly, yet watching closely.

“I am very likely to forget,” was the emphatic reply.

It was a bright sunny winter’s day, and

Bartholomew worked on persistently. Genevieve sat by him, sometimes talking, sometimes reading to him, sometimes silently working. "It is like old times," she said once, standing beside her father, who was touching the white lights on the robe of the Greek maiden.

"Yes," he said, "it is a little. It would be still more like old times if Mr. Kirkoswald were to come in."

"He will come before he goes away," Genevieve replied, feeling glad that her father could not see the hot crimson tide that flooded her face and throat. But he heard the tremulousness in her voice, and changed the question that had been on his lips.

"I should think he would be at the entertainment to-morrow evening?"

"He said that he should not."

"But he intended going away at once when he said that."

"Perhaps he may have gone, after all," Genevieve replied, a sinking of heart being noticeable in her tone.

"No, I don't think he has gone; and I

should not be surprised if he changed his intention. He did not seem in the most decided of minds about going."

"It may be so; but I have an impression that he will not be at the concert."

The impression deepened when the morning came; and hope strove with it unprevailingly. The day was bright and calm, as most of the days of that week had been; and Bartholomew sat before his easel from the first moment of sufficient light, changing his work as weariness of eye and hand came on, and feeling considerably relieved when Mr. Crudas came in for an hour after dinner to sit for his portrait. Mr. Crudas had had the good sense to come in his rough grey cloth coat. The only change he had made was the discarding of his gingham neckerchief for a blue silk one with "bird's-eye" spots. The strong characteristics of his head and face, the abundant silver-grey hair, the fresh, hale complexion, the deep, keen, searching eye were not uninspiring to a man whose feeling for the lines of human character was at least as well-developed as his eye for human beauty.

Genevieve was in the studio when Ishmael Crudas came. "You will be taking the opportunity to go for a walk, dear," her father said, setting another palette, and choosing fresh brushes.

Mr. Crudas was looking on with the amused interest of the uninitiated.

"Ay, what she nobbut leuks dowly,"\* said Ishmael. Then apparently remembering something, he turned to her questioningly. "You'll be a bit doon aboot Mr. Kirkoswald mebbe. Ha' ya heerd owt hoo he is te-daäy?"

"Is Mr. Kirkoswald ill?" Bartholomew asked, glancing toward his daughter, and making an instant effort to spare her.

"You deänt know?" said Mr. Crudas in amazement. "Why, you're buried i' this spot! You hear nowt. It's fowr daäys sen I heerd tell 'at Mr. Kirkoswald had getten t' fever. There's them 'at says he's reeght sarved; he sud ha' kept oot o' sike spots."

"He has been in some house where there was fever?"

"Ay! all t' last week he was in an' oot

\* Dowly = delicate.

among them Scaifes and Nunnelys; an' they hev it as bad as they can hev it. Young Joe Scaife's dead. He deed o' Saturday."

"They live in Thirkeld Abbas?"

"Ay, doon at t' bottom end yonder."

Eartholomew went up the orchard with his daughter, holding her hand within his arm silently; he could feel her tremulousness, he could understand her sudden weakness.

"Will you not go and lie down, dear, instead of going for a walk?"

"No, my father. I would rather be out of doors."

"You will not go through Thirkeld Abbas?"

"Not if you do not wish it."

"Go up and see Dorothy Craven, little one. She will know. And as soon as Mr. Crudas has gone I will go up to Usselby at once, and make inquiries. I do not feel unhopeful. He is so strong; and he has lived his life so temperately."

"Do you remember the last evening he was here?"

"I remember only too well now. It struck

me then that I had never heard him complain of physical weariness before."

Bartholomew was obliged to go back to his sitter, and presently Genevieve went up to her own room. This was the third sudden shock that had come upon her in a little more than three weeks.

For a time it seemed as if her strongest feeling was the feeling of remorse that came over her. She knew only too well that a man despondent, downcast, with the strings of life hanging "soundless and slack," is a tenfold easier prey to any disease, to any chill, than the man in whose veins life flows with the vigour that comes of the spirit's fervour of life.

Then, too, he had been reckless, this she could not doubt, translating some words of Canon Gabriel's by the light of Ishmael Crudas's words. He had not cared about the risk he had run since there was no one else to care. . . . Now perhaps he might never know that her caring had been passionate beyond the bounds of pain. If one told him, he might not hear; if he heard, it might be as if he heard not.

The knowledge that she could now do nothing was insupportable. Only last evening she had said to herself that when he came down she would undo all that she had done on that fatal evening. She would tell him that she had understood, that she had forgiven, that she even had sympathy for him because of all that he had suffered. . . . Now she sat there knowing that he would not come down. She might wait, but in vain ; she might listen, but in vain. She might pray ; would that be in vain also ?

Prayer is never made in vain ; and no man lives the life of prayer uncertain of its certainty. Not this answer to this prayer, nor that answer to that, shall convince you ; but the slow result of time and trial.

Prayer is sacrifice, and though that answer that you look for may never come, no sacrifice is offered vainly. Not all the incense-smoke goes upward. It descends upon the man who carries the burning censer of prayer : it enwraps him ; the cloud rises between him and the rude, wild world ; and the influence comes upon him for soothing and for calm.

There is a thrilling ecstasy of prayer in

mercy granted: it comes swiftly; it stays fitfully. There is a hallowed calm of prayer denied; it comes slowly; it comes after long wrestling, after sore strife; but it departs not at all. "He hath done all things well." So we see; so we learn to rest; assured that what He does must be always well.

\* . . . \*

An hour later Bartholomew tapped at the door of his daughter's room. He had a note in his hand. "It is from Mr. Severne, dear. The boy who brought it has gone; he did not wait for an answer."

Genevieve glanced over it hurriedly. "I had forgotten," she said. "The entertainment is this evening, and Mr. Severne begs me not to fail him; so many others have excused themselves."

"But you cannot go, dear!"

"I think I can, father. It is nothing, no trouble, I mean. And it will be good to be doing something. . . . Are you going up to Usselby?"

"Yes. If you go to the village I will go round that way, and leave you at the school-room. Mr. Severne will see you safely home."

But you will not stay at Usselby?"

"No, dear; for your sake, I will not; otherwise my place would have been by his bedside so long as any one was needed there."

The remainder of the evening passed as a dream passes. When Genevieve went into the shabby schoolroom at Murk-Marishes it was fast filling with eager people, who did not mind the smoky paraffin lamps, or the dusty brick floor. No attempt had been made to decorate the ink-stained walls. There were a few flowers about the extemporized platform. Mrs. Caton had lent her piano, which was a very good one; and Wilfrid Stuart had come up with his violin. There would be no lack of music and song, no lack of listeners, no lack of anything but the one voice, the one glance, the one presence that gave charm and gladness to all the rest. "How *can* I sing to-night?" Genevieve said to herself, going down to the farther end of the dim room to speak to Ailsie Drewe. Ailsie curtsied, and smiled the wan, unmeaning smile that was almost always on her face now. "You'll be singing that song, miss, 'The Land o' the Leal'?"

she said. "I asked Mr. Kirkoswald to tell you to sing it, an' he said he would; but mebbe he's forgot, bein' badly. But you'll sing it, miss, all the same? My little Davy was 'good an' fair,' an' I like to think he's waitin'. I like to hear ya saäy so i' the song."

"Then I will sing it if I can," Genevieve said. Two or three women were standing near, listening, waiting for a word. The girl looked at them with wearied, wistful eyes.

"I am glad to sing anything, to say anything, if I may but help you to bear your troubles a little," she said, speaking in a voice that was hardly more than a low clear whisper. "Troubles are very bad to bear sometimes, are they not? They come so quickly and so thickly, one has hardly time to get over one stroke before the next falls; and it is so difficult for us to see any lovingness in it all at the time. *We cannot see it then*; it is impossible. We can only wait, and try to hope; and even trying to hope is not easy. . . . Nothing is easy that is good. You will think that I am not com-

forting you if I tell you that life that is all pain, all suffering, all labour, all humiliation, all misunderstanding, is the best life of all. But it is so. I am learning to perceive that it is so, that it must be so, since it was the life that Christ chose to live. You know He might have been rich, and powerful, and have had the highest rank, and all the ease and luxury and importance that belong to rank and wealth. But He would have none of these things. He chose to live with poor people, fishermen, and such like : to live as they live, suffer as they suffer, because He knew that even He could not be quite humanly perfect if He did not suffer human sufferings. That is why we have to try to follow in His footsteps, to tread with bleeding feet over the same rough pathways, because He would have us perfect too. It may be that only He can see the crown of thorns that He has placed upon the brow of each one of us here ; but He does see, and He knows the sharp pressure of it. . . . He will take it away by-and-by. If we only endure to the end He Himself will take it away. If we come to stand before the great

white throne, having come there through great tribulation, He will give us other crowns for these of wounding thorn."

A few minutes later, Mr. Severne came in with Mrs. Caton and a group of ladies who had met at her house; and then, almost immediately, the concert began. It was a very pleasant and successful concert, the people thought, who were taking part in it. The listeners were always pleased, always grateful. It would have been hard to say whether "The Death of Nelson" or "The Brave Old *Téméraire*" was the more popular. The audience had risen on each occasion to a decided if unconventional *encore*. "Sing it ower again!" demanded an elderly farmer from the moor edge. "Ay, let's hev that ower again!" was the cry of support from the back benches. Accordingly the songs had to be repeated, to the great gratification of the singers. To have obtained an *encore* at Murk-Marishes was an honour to be rightly understood by no one outside the Ridings.

For Genevieve the only restful and soothing part of the programme was the violin-playing of Wilfrid Stuart. He had never

played better, never with a more infinite pathos. Was he thinking of one who might even then be lying on the misty outer verge of life? It was as if the music came to him from afar; his face was the face of one who listened, listened through sounds of pain and sorrow for other sounds that were echoing beyond. Was he interpreting those other sounds? Were they messages of peace? Had some one spoken, saying—

“Write above thy cross this inscription :  
*‘Be not afraid; only believe’?*”

“And I am trying not to be afraid,” Genevieve said to Mr. Severne as they went up by the starlit ways to Netherbank. She had spoken unreservedly of her sorrow, as her nature was; and something of her own remorse she had confessed also. But nothing was clear to him; and he did not ask that anything should be made clear. He was walking by contented ways. To-night he was happy; this trust and confidence made him happier; and perhaps a certain purpose that was in him added to the feeling. He did not disclose his purpose till they reached the stile.

“ You will come in for a little while ? ” Genevieve asked. “ I expect that my father will have come back from Usselby by this time.”

“ Shall I come in ? I wonder ! Will it be wise ? ” Mr. Severne said musingly, as if he spoke to himself. “ I think I will not. I will say ‘ good-bye ’ to you here.”

“ Why say it so solemnly ? ”

“ Was I saying it solemnly ? Perhaps I feel solemn. I think I do, in a way.”

“ But you are not unhappy ? ”

“ No ; I am not unhappy,” replied Sir Galahad with unusual readiness. “ I am very happy. I have been growing happier for a long time. Life is very pleasant, very good.”

“ Life lived with Canon Gabriel must be good,” Genevieve said, recognizing quickly the source of this new happiness.

“ Yes ; it has been. I have always known that, always felt it.”

“ Why are you speaking of it as past ? ”

“ Am I doing so ? I did not know. I hope it is not past ; but one cannot tell.”

“ One cannot tell for long. But you are

going back to it now. Surely that contents you for the present?"

"It would content me if it were so," Mr. Severne said. "But though I am not going back to it now, I am not discontented. As I told you, I am very happy."

"You are not going back?"

"Not to-night."

"Then you are going to Usselby?" Genevieve said, with a sudden feeling of mingled envy and satisfaction. The latter element changed in a moment to regret.

"Yes: I am going there," he said; "Canon Gabriel has given me permission to go. I had trouble in persuading him; but he consented at last. . . . You will believe that I am glad to go?"

Genevieve was silent for a time.

"Yes; I believe that," she said presently. "I should be glad to go myself; but I am not glad that you should go."

"Are you not? . . . I—I thought you would be very glad! There is no one else; and I cannot bear to think of him lying there with no one but Jael and old Charlock near him."

“ You are sure, then, that he is very ill ? ”  
the girl asked in quivering tones.

“ I am afraid he is . . . Dr. Armitage  
doesn’t say much ; but what he does say  
isn’t assuring. . . . But I must be off. . . .  
Can I take any—any message, or anything ? ”

Genevieve stood there a long time with her  
hand on the stile. She was quite silent. It  
seemed as if the tumult in her heart made  
words impossible. A dozen little sentences  
were chosen, and rejected for one reason or  
another. What could she say ?

“ Come with me to the door, and I will  
give you something that will speak for me,”  
she said presently. Then she brought out  
the freshest spray of myrtle that the plant in  
the window afforded. “ Will you take that ?  
Will you tell Mr. Kirkoswald that I asked  
you to give it to him ? . . . He will under-  
stand.”

Did Sir Galahad understand ? He put the  
piece of myrtle carefully into the bag he was  
carrying. The lamplight from the window  
shone full on his upturned face, full into his  
wondering blue eyes.

“ Good-night,” he said, holding out his

hand, keeping Genevieve's hand in his for one moment. “Good-night, and good-bye.”

“Good-bye for the present.”

“Yes; only for the present!” he said with a great, glad, spiritual light coming into his face. “Thank you for saying that; it is *only for the present!*”

Genevieve stood a few moments in the calm, solitary starlight that was upon all the land. She heard his footsteps dying upon the upland. A soft sighing wind, gentle as a spirit's breath, stirred the ivy; it swept by like a whisper, saying, “Only for the present.”

## CHAPTER XIII.

## A VESPER BELL.

“I leave the plain, I climb the height;  
No branching thicket shelter yields;  
But blessed forms in whistling storms  
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

Then move the trees, the copses nod,  
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:  
Oh! just and faithful knight of God!  
Ride on! the prize is near.”

TENNYSON.

GENERAL sympathy is apt to be a very disproportionate and unreasoning thing; but all the same we acknowledge it to be priceless when we need either its condolence or its congratulation. Whether a great joy be yours or a great sorrow, you shall find your heart expanding to a general and genial fellow-feeling if the felicity be yours to win the same.

Not only in the wide district known as Murk-Marishes, but far beyond, the knowledge that the master of Usselby was laid low by sickness awoke a spontaneous and intensely anxious interest—an interest which seemed almost unaccountable on the surface of it.

What is that subtle sign by which souls recognize their peers? What is that strange personal attraction which is so much more than personal? What is there in the complex depths of human character, human nature, that betrays, without word or deed, the elevation of soul which is the habitual breath of this man's life or of that? All against our will we are reduced to the confession of Shakespeare's Lucretia :

“I think him so, because I think him so.”

Though the December days were bright and keen, they yet dragged heavily at Netherbank. Noel Bartholomew was working persistently; not all his wearing anxiety for his friend might stay him from working. It was as if he were impelled by some motive outside his own consciousness. Not till the last hour of sufficient light had gone by did he lay

aside his palette, and make his way rapidly over the bleak, lone heights of Langbarugh Moor to Usselby. He might not enter—Dr. Armitage had forbidden that; but the daily message was something, whether it came from Mr. Severne or from George Kirkoswald himself—it was something. Oftenest it came from the latter, and then the painter's heart was made glad, and the gladness passed from him to another heart. Frequently Genevieve stood on the edge of the moor above the house, while her father was making his inquiries, waiting there patiently, watching the dim window where the light burned, and watching prayerfully. Had not her cross its inscription? “Be not afraid!”

But the days were fast coming when her faith's whole strength was to be tested. The crisis was at hand. Dr. Armitage rode to Usselby three times daily, and three times daily his words went abroad over the countryside. They amounted to the same each time: “The crisis is at hand; a few days, a few hours, may decide.”

“Decide what? His life or death, and my life or death?” Genevieve said to herself

passionately when the words were repeated to her. "If he die, his death will be at my door, and I cannot know it and live. There will be a curse upon my forehead; his voice will cry from the ground, and from the heaven above me there will come the cry, 'What hast thou done?'"

What had she done?

Her mental attitude on that evening after her return from Yarrell was a surprise, a mystery to herself even yet. The development of a new phase of her own character had astonished her, and that that phase should have been one of scorn and hardness was surely sufficient for a pain. It seemed now as if nothing could ever wholly do away the recollections of that evening's bitterness. If the wound were healed ever so happily, would not the scars remain? Was a restored love, a restored friendship, ever quite the same as one that had needed no restoring?

These were no idle questions.

"Forgiveness may be spoken with the tongue,  
Forgiveness may be written with the pen,"

and the forgiveness may be full and precious,

even sweet—sweet in the memory for evermore. But behind there will lie that other memory, the memory of the thing that made forgiveness necessary. It is not in human power to erase the heart's records, and the wise man prays unceasingly that the records of no heart may be the darker for any word or deed of his.

It had, of course, been impossible for Genevieve to go to Havilands. She was sorry, and Mrs. Winterford was sorry; but it might not be. There were other reasons besides the illness of George Kirkoswald. No letter had come from Mr. Montacute. Bartholomew had heard incidentally that Mr. Witherby, the artist who was to come from York, had not been able to come at the appointed time; but he had promised to give his opinion soon after Christmas. It was Christmas now. Christmas Day was over, gone by in a gloom and suspense that cast its shadow over the neighbourhood. But Bartholomew was not feeling impatient for Mr. Witherby's decision. He was trying not to think of the matter at all. It could only be pain, excessive pain, excessive humilia-

tion; but something might be taken from his pain, or something might be added to it, and it was in the nature of the man to dread the latter with a shrinking, unrelieved, and daily-growing dread.

Yet he suffered his dread in unbroken silence, in perfect-seeming calmness. His devotion to his work accounted in part for his power to control all outward manifestation of inward discomposure. The "*Œnone*" was finished at last, and downcast though the man might be, he could not resist the thrill of satisfaction that came to him one morning when he drew the curtain aside after refraining resolutely from doing so for some days. His satisfaction was of a curious and mingled kind. It was all but impersonal. That a thing of beauty had been created to be a joy for ever was more to him than the fact that he had created it. That wan, sweet, uplifted face, sorrowful with a touching and lonely sorrow, suggestive with an infinite suggestiveness, would utter things too deep for words when the hand that had painted it was at rest for evermore. That the picture —though it was not faultless—was yet a

noble and impressive picture he could not fail to see. Yet no touch of pride marred his emotion, and the glow of gladness was but a transitory thing. Inevitably reaction set in, and sadness came down, brooding like a mist athwart the face and figure of the golden-haired and beautiful-browed “Enone.”

A day or two later he stood before his completed “Judas.” This also was a full-length figure, standing

“Beneath the olive’s moon-pierced shade,” not far from the place where his Master was even then kneeling in that last agony in the garden.

On the face of the Judas also there was an agony; though the kiss was not yet given, there was agony, an agony of doubt, of temptation, that was all but overwhelming. The price—the thirty pieces of silver—was in his hand; but he had not yet earned his price. He had yet to earn it, this he knew, and of this knowledge was born the anguish on his face, an anguish that a man might be constrained to pity though he might never pardon the pitiless deed that came of that

deliberation. The picture was powerful, fascinating rather than beautiful. The pale, intellectual, inscrutable face was a face to haunt you in any hour of life when you might be open to opposing influences. Yet, though it haunted you to torture, you would be conscious of yearning toward it, yearning to save the man from himself, from the aftermath of his own traitorous deed. Having once seen Bartholomew's Judas you never forgot that the man who betrayed his Master had immediately found his remorse to be greater than he could bear. . . . Not every traitor has the grace to go out and hang himself.

There were a few touches to be put to the Sir Galahad. This was only a head on a canvas some thirty inches square. It was hardly more than a portrait; but it was, of course, an idealized portrait. The painter had made it touchingly pathetic; and the spirituality of the picture was as the spirituality of the poem, a thing to move a man against his coldest and earthiest will.

Bartholomew was sitting before it, looking into it, passing the points of his brushes between his fingers listlessly.

“Shall you finish it to-day, father?”  
Genevieve asked.

“I don’t know, dear. . . . I don’t feel like touching it.”

It was the last day of the old year, and it had a sadness not all its own for the artist and his daughter. Dr. Armitage had promised to come round by Netherbank on his return from his first visit to Usselby; he had not come yet, and the suspense was growing as the moments went on. The doctor had thought it quite probable that he might have something decisive to say; but he had given no opinion as to the nature of that decisiveness. He had tried to make his manner as neutral as his words; but he had not succeeded in this. We always know more than we discern; and it seemed to Genevieve that she already heard him pronouncing that last fatal sentence that he would pronounce so clearly, so straightforwardly, and yet with such undertones of sympathy. . . . These undertones had been there all through for her.

Once, meeting Dr. Armitage in the lane whilst her eyes were still wet with the fruit-

less tears, she had urged in wild abandonment—

“ Make him well again, Dr. Armitage. Save him, for my sake, save him ! ”

And she would never forget the tones in which the answer came—

“ *I wish I could ! I wish I could promise you. But believe that I will do my best.* ”

He always did his best, and he always knew when others did their best, and gave them credit for it generously.

“ If Mr. Kirkoswald recovers, as I trust he will,” he said one evening, “ his recovery will be largely due to Mr. Severne’s nursing ; I may say to his devotion. I have not often seen anything like it. He seems able to do without sleep for a quite unlimited period.”

The morning wore on ; and about noon the weather changed. The sky darkened suddenly, the wind rose, showers of biting sleet came driving up from the north-east. Work had not seemed possible before, and it was less possible now.

“ I will go up to Usselby,” Bartholomew said. “ I must go. I cannot endure this any longer.”

“ You will let me go with you ? ” Genevieve said pleadingly.

“ In this storm, my child, and with that thin white face ? It is out of the question. But trust me. I will not keep you in suspense one moment longer than is inevitable. Be quiet, little one ; be good, as good and quiet as you have been all through.”

“ Tell me honestly what you are thinking now, my father ? ”

“ You will believe in my honesty ? ”

“ To the last letter.”

“ Then during the past hour I have been possessed by a hopefulness for which I cannot account. It seems like vision, like sight. Scenes come before me, *and stay*, and George is in them always.”

The sleety hail was rattling upon the windows when he went out ; the trees were tossing against a dark sky that broke here and there, letting through a cold steely glare that was worse than the darkness. All the way across Langbarugh Moor he had to contend against the bitter weather that had come to rave about the last hours of the dying year.

Old Jael answered his muffled knock. "T' doctor's here," she said. "He's been here all t' daäy; an' there's noä chaänge, not yet. But there'll be chaänge afore long, Ah reckon. T' fever's aboot as high as it can be; an' he's been wanderin' all t' neet—wanderin' on aboot you an' miss, for t' most part; an' thinkin' he heerd her singin'. Ah guess 'twas another sort o' singin' he heerd, and it made me shiver when he talked on it. I've heerd it mysel' i' this hoose afore toäy, and it bodes noä good. There's allus somebody hes a dark dyke to wade after it."

The old woman spoke in hard tones and with dry eyes; but the drawn lines about her mouth, the hollow in her furrowed cheeks, had only come there lately. There is a different grief to each of us, and misapprehension is easy.

They were standing at the door, a little sheltered by the projecting archway.

"I suppose I may not come in, since Dr. Armitage is against it?" Bartholomew said. "But if change is imminent I cannot go back yet awhile."

"There's t' greenhoose doon at t' bottom

o' t' garden," Jael said. "It's nobbut a little spot, an' it's cram full o' new plants; but it's warm. Ben's doon there potterin' aboot efter t' fire noo. Ya mud stop in there a bit."

Bartholomew sauntered up and down rather disconsolately amongst the unarranged plants. It was a dismal little place at present; still, silent, oppressive. The dark clouds went on gathering; the night was coming down. Patience was not difficult, but it was appalling. The hopeful visions had deserted him. There were voices in the gusty wind that went shivering and wuthering by. Great cold rain-drops began to fall upon the glass relentlessly. Then, after two hours of dreary waiting, there was a welcome sound of footsteps upon the gravel path. . . . Was it welcome?

It was Dr. Armitage who opened the door. "*This* is lively!" he said in cheerful tones as he came into the dim silent little spot. "Where are you? Oh, there! . . . No, don't thank me." Bartholomew was shaking hands with him. "Thank God!" he was saying, "and thank *you* for all that you have

done." The doctor had said no word of Kirkoswald yet, but his tone had told nearly all that might be told. "Small thanks are due to me," he replied. "You will have to thank that young curate as much for his obedience to orders as anything. But come away out of this. I have my car there. I shall be glad of your company home."

"And the danger is over?"

"The danger is over. My patient is asleep; and the fever has subsided rapidly. . . . If all goes well he will be as hungry as a hunter by this time to-morrow."

There was a white figure standing watching by the stile when the doctor's dog-cart began to descend the road that led down from the moor; but the figure fled swiftly, hearing voices on the wind. Genevieve knew that it was her father and Dr. Armitage who were coming down together; but she could not wait there for the news they might be bringing. "Is it life? Is it, is it death?" she said half-audibly, standing in the firelight with clasped hands and bowed head. She was trembling violently when her father came in; her eyes were looking out toward him

eagerly, wildly, almost uncomprehendingly ; her strength was gone. She put out her two hands, and fell into his arms with a cry.

“ Tell me the worst, my father.”

Then he kissed her, again and again he kissed her.

“ There is no worst, my darling. There is no worst. . . . God has been very good.”

\* \* \* \* \*

There is no thankfulness like the thankfulness of relief. There is no quiet like the quiet that comes when long and intense anxiety is at an end, and the end is the end we have wished and prayed for.

Both Bartholomew and his daughter had had more of dread and less of hope than they quite knew. We never do know the full depths of a suspense until the end of suspense has declared itself, and upon no man does the shock of the worst come so hardly as upon him who has believed himself prepared to face it.

As life passes on, the great deliverances are received more and more quietly, more and more with hidden, abiding gratitude. It is the unworn, the untried, who are overjoyed,

and who hold that the terror that is past can have none like to it. Every spring prepares for winter ; and though each calamity has its limit, you shall not discern how near the boundary of the next calamity lies to this.

Next day, New Year's Day it was, Noel Bartholomew went up once more across the moor and through the tossing pinewoods. He was alone again, the day being too cold and threatening to admit of his having the satisfaction of his daughter's company. He had promised that he would go back again as quickly as possible.

"I have only come up to wish Mr. Kirkoswald a happy New Year," he said to Jael. "And, of course, my good wishes include Mr. Severne. . . . You will tell them both ?"

"Ay, Ah'll tell 'em noo," said Jael, more gratified than she was able to show. "Ah'll tell 'em noo. Mebbe he'll send ya a word or two back. He's as peärt\* as owt."

"He," of course, was always her master ; but her master was asleep just now ; and the message that came was written on a slip of

\* Peart = alert, lively.

paper by the patient watcher who was still at George Kirkoswald's bedside.

“Thank you very much,” Sir Galahad said, “and I know I may send Mr. Kirkoswald's thanks as well as mine; and his best wishes for the New Year. I seem to feel sure that it will be a happy year for all of us. I never felt sure in this way before. . . . Please tell Miss Bartholomew, with my kind regards, that Mr. Kirkoswald is doing as well as possible—Dr. Armitage says so. I am wondering if I shall get down to church for the Epiphany. I should so much like to offer the Thanksgiving myself, and to offer it on that day.”

So Ernest Severne wrote, not dreaming that when the day of light came he would be at the Rectory, lying there in the stillness and darkness of his own room, stricken with fever, sorely stricken; yet—so far—as fully conscious as he was wholly undismayed.

The stroke had seemed to fall suddenly. No one had noticed any change in him, not even George Kirkoswald, whose deep gratitude was growing with every hour of his convalescence. More than gratitude was

growing. That indefinite charm of mingled boyishness and goodness, of simplicity and self-abnegation which had won the young curate friends everywhere, had won for him all the affectionate regard that was needful for the foundation of a strong and lasting friendship between himself and Kirkoswald. It was a friendship that was in its earliest stage as yet.

“I only know that there is something I want to strengthen, something I dread to lose,” George said two or three days after the critical moment of his own illness had gone by. And less than an hour after he had so said he perceived to his utter dismay that Mr. Severne was lying back in the big armchair that he used always, pallid, faint, and only half-conscious. Jael came quickly. Ben saddled his master’s horse and went hurrying down in the dim evening light for Dr. Armitage. The doctor saw at a glance how it was. The faintness was over, and the shivering fit that had followed was over, but other signs were written only too plainly.

He knew it all himself; he had seen too many fever cases of late not to know.

“I am not afraid,” he said, “and the Canon is not afraid; so you will let me go home —to the Rectory, I mean, now while I may go.” And though Dr. Armitage objected, and George Kirkoswald besought him to remain, he went on pleading. “Let me go home to my own room. I do not wish to seem obstinate; but please let me go home!”

And so when the morning came he was taken to the Rectory, back to his own sombre room, that was all hung with dark blue, and where all his own small treasures had been arranged to his satisfaction. The two narrow windows looked northward. The sun was shining on the paddock below when he went in; the shadows of the leafless trees stirred on the grass, birds were piping cheerily.

“This is good,” he said, his parched lips parting into a smile. “This is good. I have always said the birds in the Rectory trees sang more sweetly than any other birds. I wanted to hear them. I wanted to see the field with the sunshine on it again. . . . Now I have all I wanted: it is very good.”

For a day or two Dr. Armitage hoped that his first impression had been a mistaken one.

The young man lay so calm, so still, and bore the pain and the strong thirst that was upon him so uncomplainingly, that his nervous system was quieter far than George Kirkoswald's had been ; and this gave a better chance, and offered a straw for hopefulness to catch. But it was no more than a straw ; to be utterly consumed in that dread fever-flame that was burning away the youth's life so quickly—so quickly and yet so quietly, so silently.

Unfortunately, his mother, who was a widow, had gone abroad, and had taken her two daughters with her. They had been at Nice, at Montpellier ; then Mrs. Severne had written a hasty note, saying that, having met some friends, they were going over the Pyrenees into Spain. She would write again, she had said ; but no other letter had come yet. So it was that just at that moment Mr. Severne was hardly sure of their exact whereabouts. Letters were written, telegrams sent, but no answer came.

There was no lack of nurses : half a dozen women out of the little townlet volunteered to come, and two were chosen ; but the Canon

seldom left the bedside except when duty called him away. The old man sat there, or knelt there by day and by night. If prayer might avail prayer should not be wanting ; but every plea was ended as the Master ended His :—

“ Not my will, but Thine.”

Delirium set in fitfully at first ; consciousness came flickeringly between : one merged into the other in strange and unaccountable ways.

“ Do you know me, Ernest ? ” the Canon said to him on the evening of the day he had desired to keep as a day of thanksgiving for the recovery of another. A little while before he had not known the face that was bent over him so anxiously ; but now a calmer mood had come, and the Canon was fain to speak a little while he might. “ Do you know me, my son ? ” he asked, with pale, patient lips, and eyes dim with watching. And the younger man smiled, putting out his hand.

“ We shall always know each other,” he said. “ And I think I shall find and know your other son — we shall wait for you together.”

“ You will not have long to wait,” the old man rejoined with the calmness of one who trusts death for all that life has denied.

“ No ; I think it will not be long. . . . When I say ‘ good-bye ’ to you I shall say it as *she* said it, *only for this present*. You will see her. . . . You will tell her I did not forget ? ”

“ Genevieve ?—Yes ; I will tell her,” the Canon said, still holding the hot hands in his own cool palm. “ She was here to-day with her father—I would not let them come in ; but I saw them for a moment, and I had to turn the child away from the door with her eyes full of tears.”

“ Tears ! ” said Sir Galahad, with the old look of wonder coming into his round blue eyes. “ Why should she cry ? Why should it be sorrow ? Oh ! tell her—tell them all that death is not sorrowful. . . . Why have we made it so ? Why do people think of it with dread, when it is so beautiful, so fair, so calm a thing ? . . . Three nights ago I heard the wings of the Angel of Death about my bed, rushing with the rhythm and sweep of music ; and there was a Face I could not see,

and a Voice I could not hear—not clearly. . . . But when the time comes I shall see plainly, and the Voice will speak distinctly, and I shall go—*I shall go with Him.* Can you think that is a sorrow?"

The Canon's lips trembled as he spoke.

"It does not seem sorrowful to me," he said. "But I am old, and full of years; and I shall be glad to be at rest. . . . But you . . . ."

"Does it take years to make one weary? I have been weary a long time; and I have wished for rest a long time. . . . Now I am going where there will be no more weariness."

Then the blue eyes closed as if in sleep for a little while, but the lips went on murmuring half unconsciously at intervals.

"You will tell her," he said. "You will tell her about the lilies. I planted them for her; they are in the shrubbery, down where the larkspurs grow. When they are in bloom she will come and gather them, and take them home. Tell her I would have taken them. I meant to take them to her. I planted them all for her. And there are

some lilies-of-the-valley, too. Roses of Sharon and lilies-of-the-valley. . . . A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. . . . Awake! O north wind, and come, thou south, and blow upon my garden!"

And still the fever increased, and delirium increased with it, but the visions were the same, the same peace was in them, the same simple, spiritual beauty.

And on to the end it was the same. Not once might fear touch him; not once might dismay enter into him.

Though the Valley of the Shadow of Death be dark, if He walk with us there, in Whose Right Hand are the morning stars that sing together, and in Whose Eyes is the radiance of that love that led to the Cross and the grave, we shall not fear the darkness.

It was midnight when the Bridegroom came.

He came with seeming suddenness. There was no one there but Canon Gabriel. The old man knelt, holding the still hands in his, praying, listening, watching.

“There is the bell for evening service,”  
the dying lips said quietly. . . . “I must go  
now. . . . I am glad I have a clean surplice.  
I will arise and go. . . .”

## CHAPTER XIV.

### SAPPHIRES AND AGATES.

“That low man seeks a little thing to do,  
Sees it and does it :  
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,  
Dies ere he knows it.

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

That, has the world here—should he need the next  
Let the world mind him !  
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed,  
Seeking shall find Him.”

ROBERT BROWNING.

THOUGH it was winter-time it seemed as if all nature lent itself to the peace, the calm, the beauty that gathered about the new-made grave in the churchyard by the Rectory.

On the very day when it was made the widowed mother came and stood there with new tears on her face, and hopes in her heart newly dead. Her daughters were near her to

comfort her ; and she knew that other sons in other lands sorrowed with her, and for her. Yet, though these were left, her tears went on flowing for the one who was taken, the one who was the youngest of them all, and whose life had seemed fullest of fair and high promise.

There was comfort in Canon Gabriel's presence, comfort and healing and peace. "I cannot feel as if he were dead," the old man said in his gentle sympathetic way, walking up and down with Mrs. Severne over the green turf at the bottom of the churchyard. There was a little stream running by ; a bold, bright-eyed robin was chirping on the briar-sprays that swept the water ; a blackbird piped his short winter note in the boughs of a tall alder-tree ; the bushes of rosemary in the graveyard were fresh and green ; the golden yews were tinted with russet red. There was life everywhere, and promise of life to be.

"This is nature's sleep," the Canon said, "and his sleep is like to it. There is no violent break in the passing year. There is change, but there is also a visible continuity.

The night of death, such death as his, is but as the summer night when the sun scarce dips below the horizon for an hour. When the sunset ended, and when the sunrise began, you shall hardly know though you watch ever so closely."

When Mrs. Severne went away she took with her, for her great consolation, the portrait of her son that Mr. Bartholomew had painted. It was a gift from George Kirkoswald, and the Canon added another small gift; the latter was a piece of folded paper.

"It is only an old man's thought done into words," he said; "but it is one that may soothe you a little when the privilege of trying to do so is mine no longer."

The thought had come in the silence of the night. It was meant for no eye but hers; yet if it have comfort for any other it may be written here.

#### IN MEMORIAM.

E. S.

"Yea, weep for awhile, let the hot, slow tears fall  
sadly,

Since Jesus wept by the grave where Lazarus lay;  
For now by a new-made grave stand many weeping—  
Hush! let us grieve; speak not of solace to-day.

“ When the time to be healed shall come we will not  
refuse healing,

Gently, and sweetly, shall memory come to us then,  
Bearing with hands wide-folded the fragrant amaranth,

Flowerets of deeds done never for praise of men.

“ Fair white roses of love, and balms of compassion,  
Tendrils of pity that clung to the homeless and  
poor,

Violets of graceful humility, seeking the shadow,  
Passion-flowers plucked from the Cross where he  
learnt to endure.

“ We will lovingly whisper of deeds done in secret and  
silence,

Of wretchedness sought in the haunts where the  
wretched hide,

Of sorrow relieved, of sorrow foreseen and averted,  
Of Christ-like sympathy, ceaseless, and priceless,  
and wide.

“ Beauteous his life was, and beauteous too was the  
passing

From life that now is to the life that for ever  
shall be;

We mourn him, they welcome, the angels who dwell  
in that City,

And sing to the sound of the harp by the crystal  
sea.”

It was some days before the Canon was  
able to go over to Netherbank. The bright  
calm weather lingered on; a daisy or two

studded the hedgerows; the catkins on the alder-trees turned to purple in the sun; the pale heads of last year's grasses were bowed gracefully; the red oak-leaves rustled and whispered together. Were they whispering sympathy? There was a smile on the face of the old man when he went into the studio down the orchard. And there was change in his voice too. Who does not know that strange touching intonation that comes into voices that have been silenced by bereavement? The unspoken words vibrate through the spoken ones; other meanings flash across the commonplace thing that is uttered.

“Dr. Armitage gave me permission to come; he thought that it would be better than your coming to me,” the old man said, taking the chair that Genevieve placed for him by the fire. Here was all the old sweet life again, with all its old daintiness, its old homeliness. Sorrows had come and gone; and changes and chances had happened; but the changes had changed nothing. Genevieve's soft subdued smile, the pretty pink flush of pleasure that had come with the Canon's coming, and her great crown of

shining golden hair seemed to take all the idea of mournfulness from her black dress. "There are so many things I want to know," the Canon went on, "so many things I want to say, that I could not keep away any longer than I was compelled. And first of all I want to know about Mr. Kirkoswald. The doctor's *bulletins* perplex me."

"You know that the worst is over?" Bartholomew said.

"Yes; I know so much as that; but I also gather that his recovery is slow and disappointing."

"Do you wonder that it should be so?" the artist asked. "Do you think it has been no shock to him, this terrible sequence to his own illness? I have not seen him; but I can well understand that his trouble is very great."

"You think it is that, then, that hinders his convalescence?"

"I fear so."

"Then I shall ask Dr. Armitage if I may not go to Usselby to-morrow. I have messages that can hardly fail to be messages of peace," said the Canon, with the gentle smile

coming over his beautiful face again. . . . “But why do you say ‘terrible’? There has been no terror. There is none now.”

Bartholomew paused. “I suppose I used the word thoughtlessly,” he said, since the terribleness that may undoubtedly be connected with the idea of death has never rooted itself as an impression in my mind. I will not say that I have not known dread; but I think it is certainly true that God permits the fear of death when it is intended that a man should live, and takes it away when it is intended that he shall die.”

“You speak as if it were going from yourself?”

“It has gone.”

Genevieve laid her hand on her father’s arm, and looked into his eyes. There was only affection there, and patient endurance, and a quiet light lighting these to new beauty.

“I will not say I long for death,” the artist went on. “There are many reasons why I should not desire it yet. But since—since that morning the idea of it has been very present with me. And, like all ideas that

remain persistently, it has grown and widened within me till it fills a large space."

"Is it the idea of death that has so widened?" the Canon asked; "or is it the idea of what is beyond?"

"Mainly of what is beyond. The passing is a mere falling asleep. We die daily. Sleep is as mysterious as death. I do not say that death is not mysterious; the life after death is more full of mystery still; and no new ray of light is ever thrown there. But I think that since we human beings have done much by our dark and ignorant conceptions to invest the life to come with human alarms and misgivings, it is only fitting that we should now try to disencumber the spiritual ground of the old tangled overgrowths of childish terrorism, and low speculative ideas of the vengeance of a God Whose wrath has been preached to us till we cannot, dare not, grasp the thesis of His love. Putting aside for the moment the accepted views of the sure and certain hope of the Christian creed, I think that the merest glimpse into the vastnesses of the universal order of things assures to us a wider—and if I may say it—

a more attractive and congenial futurity than most theologians venture to promise us. To the ordinary human mind the contemplation of such beatitude as that set before us in the Apocalypse is not—let me confess it—made without a certain shrinking, a certain awe, a certain sense of the overwhelmingness of that perpetual spiritual altitude to be maintained beyond the gates of pearl. There are men and women, and these not the worst, who are daunted rather than drawn, dismayed rather than encouraged; and it seems to me that so long as humanity is human that absolute transformation will be yearned for only by the few."

"Only by the few," said Canon Gabriel with a sudden light and comprehension. "Many are called, but only the few enter into that inner court of the Kingdom of Heaven where they rest not day nor night from adoration."

"And you think there may be outer courts?"

"I am assured that there are many, many mansions; and I am assured that one star differeth from another star in glory. . . . I

fear there has been, as you say, a good deal of mistaken conception as regards the future life ; doubtless it yet exists ; and though all controversy on the subject must end pretty nearly where it began, something certainly might be done to put new life into ideas so overlaid by the old conventional phrases as to have lost all semblance of vigour and truth."

"I have suffered from those phrases all my life," said Bartholomew ; "my soul's health has suffered ; and I believe that millions of people, if they would confess the truth, would admit the same. It is even so with many texts of the Scripture itself. They have been repeated so often, and in such mindless, reckless ways, that they have come to have no meaning in them."

"Yes," said the Canon. "I have often wondered what exactly is the nature of the comfort derived by many people from the magnificent declaration—

'We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.'

Which of us has the joy in that that he might

have? Which of us remembers that to be—humanly speaking—as we believe Christ to be now, will be to have not only a spirit, a distinct individual spirit of one's own, but also an intellect, with all the known attributes of intellectual knowledge, and desire for knowledge; thought, and power to use thought; will, and power to exercise will; affection, and desire to expend and receive affection; and all these increased and heightened to a degree we do not dream of here. And could any one for a moment imagine it possible that a being so endowed with the powers of life would have no social and intellectual life to put such powers into requisition? Is it conceivable that no services save services of song would be demanded of him? Growth and advancement and achievement will surely be expected of us there, as here; and these things mean effort and action, and response to ever-increasing depths and heights of Divine influence. . . . It hath not entered into the heart of man, that full conception of what will be, it can never enter here, but assuredly we might open our minds, and not be afraid to open them to such conceptions as

even human reason may attain by the light of the Spirit, and reverent effort to arrive at the truer and fuller meaning of such revelation as has been made. It is within the grasp of the least vivid understanding to believe that—

‘ There shall never be one lost good ! What was, shall live as before ;  
The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound ;  
What was good, shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more ;  
On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven a perfect round.  
‘ All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist ;  
Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power,  
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist  
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.’ ”

Genevieve was listening, thinking. It was becoming easier to recognize the fact that that other world, that other life, was only a continuance of this. He who had so recently gone had just slipped quietly and peacefully away, as some people like to do when they are going on a journey. “ If he were to

come back again, 'I should not feel it to be strange,'" she said to herself. She was sorrowing with a deep and silent sorrow, knowing that she had lost that rare possession, a true and faithful and loyal friend. His face came before her always just as she had seen it last when he stood in the light that fell from the cottage window. If she stood on the steps in the evening now she could always see it there. If she spoke, she felt he heard.

It was impossible not to see that there had been sacrifice, willing, loving, ready sacrifice. He had given all that a man may give—his life—and he had laid it down for his friend, for his two friends. "It was as much for my sake as for yours, George," she said, "for yours as much as for mine." It was in the silence and loneliness of the night that she spoke to herself. Life was very lonely now, very full of negations and misgivings. Only hope remained, vibrating through the days, running in and out like a silken thread of blue all across the grey web that Fate was weaving. The next shuttle might be filled with strands of gold and silver; the pattern might be changed to a shining arabesque of

fruits and flowers. It is good sometimes to think what good may be. It is never good to refuse to see aught but ill. The fearful are seldom brave, seldom patient. Hope is the very centre and mainspring of long-sufferance. No beatitude was pronounced to the despairing.

## CHAPTER XV.

“I HAVE DARED AND DONE. SO NOW I WILL  
TRY TO SLEEP.”

“But this is human life: the war, the deeds,  
The disappointment, the anxiety,  
Imaginations, struggles, far and nigh,  
All human; bearing in themselves this good  
That they are still the air, the subtle food,  
To make us feel existence, and to show  
How quiet death is.”

KEATS, *Endymion*.

GENEVIEVE’s hope was not deferred to the point of heart-sickness. As the clear, cold January days went on the messages from Usselby became more and more buoyant and gladdening. George was able to sit up all day; to read for hours at a time. With the first mild February morning came the news that Dr. Armitage had said that his patient would be out on the moors before

the end of another week. Netherbank was not far from the moors.

Let but a few more weeks pass, and the wild cherry would be in bloom, and the crab-apple trees, and Birkklegg Gill would be ankle-deep with wild-flowers again ; and musical with birds as wild as the flowers were. And the cuckoo would be there upon the hills above, calling, calling, never weary of calling to the spring.

Was it really only a year, nay, much less than a year, since that day when George had held her hands in his with a warm, strong, passionate grasp ; and had looked into her eyes beseechingly, and had asked her for her love, for her whole life's love, and she had answered, "I am yours, I am yours always till I die" ? Was it possible that it was less than ten months ago ?

She had lived a life since then, and learnt a life's lessons.

Her love which was only then dawning, only then awakening to the consciousness of the bliss and pain of love, had fathomed all the mystic depths of love's anguish since that day. Was the day of compensation at hand ?

Would she now know the heights as she had known the depths—the heights of love's hope, love's gain, love's ecstasy? It could hardly be that her anticipations were unreasonable. It was in the nature of things that the one extreme should assure the other. Every night had its day; every winter its spring; every ebbing tide its free full flowing. No; her hope could not be unreasonable. She might cherish it in patience, in the calm and ample region of trust, in the divine strength of faith. The springtide was coming upon the land; it had already come in the heart of Genevieve Bartholomew.

So every budding snowdrop was welcome; and every spear of the daffodil leaves a new joy. The prophetic little celandine, spreading its golden stars to the pale sun, was a thing to be mused over with rapture.

And the rapture was doubly rapturous in that it had not to be enjoyed alone. Noel Bartholomew's quiet artistic receptivity of the promise that was in the very air was something almost solemn in the silent depths of it. His work was done. He was only waiting now for the decision that was to come through

Mr. Montacute; and though he still kept silence Genevieve was beginning to perceive that the waiting was unfortunate. More and more he shrank from any mention of the matter, even to her; yet she perceived that he was brooding over it. The change on his face, the sudden greyness, the sudden strangeness in his eyes, the tightening of the muscles about his mouth if any one spoke of it, betrayed the fact that there was yet some hidden dread, some fear of stings and arrows still in the hands of outrageous fortune. As much as possible she remained with him, drawing his attention to other and brighter things. And she had the satisfaction of feeling that she was not wholly unsuccessful.

One day, it was the last day of January, he had gone down to the studio quite early in the morning, going silently, and with a certain suddenness; and when Genevieve went down later she found that he had begun a sketch in oil of a picture he meant to paint on a large scale. The sketch was full of life, and vigour, and pathos. Genevieve saw at a glance that it was the outcome of inspiration, of that fuller and higher light of which

her father had spoken so solemnly, and yet so sadly. There was nothing to awaken sadness in this sketch of the Good Samaritan. The rough, dark, stony background was indicated. In the foreground there was the Samaritan himself, an elderly rugged figure with no beauty save the beauty of a divine compassion on his face. He was supporting the wounded man—too badly wounded to ride even that patient-looking beast without support. The figures were both half-nude, the Samaritan having evidently shared his own garments with the half-dead traveller, whose head was thrown back on his kindly neighbour's shoulder, and whose pallid face was yet expressive of consciousness, of satisfaction, of gratitude for deliverance. There was even a smile on the lips; and the half-closed eyes had peace in them, and knowledge of safety and succour.

There was slight attempt to teach any new or direct lesson; but no man looking into the picture, even into the sketch already made for the picture, would look there without receiving, unconsciously it might be, some fresh impulse to stir and elevate his

idea of his duty toward his neighbour. And not only of his duty, but of his high privilege, perhaps even also of the great joy and gladness that might be his if he willed. If there be a pure happiness in this world, that happiness assuredly lies within the lines of the acts of mercy.

The sketch was begun one day, completed the next, that is with such completeness as was necessary to Noel Bartholomew's purpose. It was dated Saturday, February 1st.

"I shall begin the picture as soon as I come back from London," he said, putting the easel with the wet canvas upon it into a safe corner. It was hardly yet twilight; but the best of the day was gone. It was a satisfaction to Mr. Bartholomew that it had not gone by unprofitably; and it was a sort of satisfaction that Genevieve knew to be particularly grateful to him. The healing and soothing that he found in his work was the best of all soothing, or at any rate next best to that which came to him in the voices from the hills, and from the large lone sea.

"You will go out for a walk, father?" Genevieve said as they lingered over their

cup of afternoon tea. Dr. Armitage had left his cheery message. A package had come from Mrs. Winterford during the day containing a chalice-shaped vase of rose-red Venetian glass, and some beautiful Burano lace. Then a precious little note had come from Canon Gabriel, who had been to Usselby, and had gone back to the Rectory so glad, so satisfied, that his gladness had run over, filling another cup. It was a red-letter day; and the close of it was gratitude and peace, peace within and peace without, with Nature's great stillness brooding over all in sympathy.

They went out of doors together, the father and daughter. There was a young moon, the merest rim of silver in a luminous arctic heaven of dark blue ether, deepening to indigo above, paling and changing to dusky daffodil-yellow below. The stars were coming out one by one. The landscape stood in still mystic darkness against the clear sky. Not a tree stirred, not a sound broke the silence till suddenly a woodlark burst into song as full, as perfect, as sweet, as touching as the song of any nightingale that ever poured her

plaintive anthem across the valley-glades of the south. For a minute or two the artist was perplexed, believing that it was the nightingale's song he heard; then he remembered, and recognized the note that came from the leafless whitethorn overhead.

He stood quite close to the foot of the tree; his daughter's hand was on his arm; they listened almost breathlessly.

Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale," Shelley's poem "To the Skylark," must seem strangely far-fetched and over-elaborated pieces of sentiment to one who has never felt his whole being overpowered, his whole nature merged, in the ecstasy of a bird's song.

It is ecstasy in the daytime: it is double ecstasy in the night when the world is still, when darkness is upon the land, when the bird sings only to God and to you—to you alone of all the living breathing millions upon the earth.

Still the woodlark sang on, singing his thrilling, rippling, half-glad, half-plaintive song, burdened with meanings unutterable, unutterable and incomprehensible, yet turning surely upon the things that belong to the rest

to be, its certain sweet acceptableness, its undreamed depths of beauty and satisfyingness.

"Now one feels," Bartholomew said softly, "how Keats must have suffered in his brief life before he could have written that ode. Poets are said to be 'cradled into poetry by wrong.' I think one has to be cradled into full appreciation of poetry by suffering of some kind. Who that did not long for rest would care for this ?

'Darkling I listen ; and for many a time  
I have been half in love with easeful death,  
Call'd him soft names in many a musèd rhyme,  
To take into the air my quiet breath ;  
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,  
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad  
In such an ecstasy !  
Still wouldest thou sing, and I have ears in vain--  
To thy high requiem become a sod.'"

"And you are tired, father, or you would not care for it so much just now," Genevieve said. They were going homeward in the still starlight.

"Yes," Bartholomew acknowledged. "I am tired ; I am very tired."

"It is partly because of your sleeplessness.

If I lie awake for two or three hours I am wearied. And you lose whole nights, one after another. . . . I wish you did not sleep so badly, father!"

"Then remember your wish, dear, when you know that I am sleeping better."

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

The next morning, Sunday morning, though it was but February, yet had all the attributes that George Herbert strung so finely together. It was sweet, and cool, and calm, and bright—calm as only Sunday morning in the country can be. Assuredly, if there be on earth any foretaste of heaven, it is then and there.

Bartholomew got up early; he had had another night of absolute sleeplessness, and the daylight had been welcome; the sweet clear sunshine spreading across the blueness of the morning was more welcome still. The doves came whirring and wheeling down; there was a sudden flitting of wings across the window-pane; a soft mavis note came from the thatch. The sparrows were darting vigorously hither and thither; the snowdrops hung straight and white and still. Down in

the village the blue-white smoke was beginning to curl against sea and sky.

The artist sauntered along the field ; it was to lie fallow this year, Miss Craven had decreed, and the weeds among the dead stubble were promising finely. A daisy or two studded the grassy edges of the lands ; the swallow-wort was still sleeping on the shady side of the hedgerow near the stile ; rich, green, changeful mosses were spreading everywhere.

The perfect stillness was broken presently. There was a footstep in the lane, a figure coming upward from the village. "It is not any one I know," Bartholomew said to himself as a tall dark young man came swiftly nearer. Then the artist turned, sauntering back along the field until he heard the step upon the path behind him. The young man had a letter in his hand.

"It is from Mr. Montacute," he said politely, giving it to Bartholomew. "I ought to have brought it over last night when I left the office ; but when I got home I found my mother ill, and I was not able to leave her. . . . I hope the few hours' delay will make no difference ? "

“None at all,” said Mr. Bartholomew, who had hardly heard the explanation. He spoke in a curiously absent way. “It can make no difference. Thank you for bringing it over this morning.”

“There is not, of course, much time lost,” added the young man, turning away. “Mr. Witherby did not come to our office till yesterday afternoon. Good morning.”

For some minutes Bartholomew stood there between Miss Craven’s weed-grown acres, holding the unopened note in his hand, looking out across the great stretch of sapphire sea that was beyond the green cliff-tops. Far off in the distance he could see the red-tiled roofs of Swarthcliff beginning to glitter in the morning sun. “Bright blue, bright green, bright red,” he said to himself. “To render that with any truth one would certainly fall into crudeness, while the word is simply sacrilege applied to the scene itself.”

Who does not know the way in which thought seems persistently to wrest itself from some boding momentous thing, and turn to any irrelevant trifle that may offer itself? There is no great hour of our life

that has not its small associations. If you sit by a dying bed you shall see the pattern on the coverlet; and while you wait for the word that is to decide your whole life's fate, you shall see grotesque faces in the fire so distinctly that they become graven on your mind's eye for evermore.

A thrilling flood of song from the sycamore-tree by the opposite gate seemed to arouse Bartholomew for a moment, to remind him that the unopened letter was still in his hand. He looked at it. "Mr. Montacute's handwriting is very excellent," he said, turning back again, and sauntering toward the stile.

It was a thrush that was singing its spring prelude in the leafless sycamore. It hardly stayed its song while Bartholomew passed underneath, going upward between the great dark whin-bushes, and the straggling briar-sprays where the last-year's leaves still lingered in tones of dusky gold and crimson and green. Genevieve, looking out from her little window under the thatch, was glad to see him going up to the moor in the still Sunday sunshine. "He will come back with

some appetite for his breakfast this morning," she said as she stood twining the lengths of her rippling golden hair. Presently she paused, stooping to the window again, watching her father as if drawn to watch him by some new and sudden springing of new affection. So she stood till the dark figure went up over the ridge and disappeared in the yellow sunlight that was upon the moorland hills above the sapphire sea.

"The people who watched when Moses went up to the Mount of God must have seen him disappear so," the girl said reverently. She was still standing by the window in the thatch.

If the silence had been great on the hill-side, it was sublime upon the heights of Langbarugh Moor. The leagues of brown heather stretched darkly away on every side ; the stalks of the tall dead weeds stood still and beautiful ; dark whin-brakes broke the monotony of space and line ; the great grey boulders were there, looking white in the sunshine. There was a slight haze upon the far landward distances, giving that sense of mystery, of something more

than is seen, which is necessary to man's fullest enjoyment everywhere.

Bartholomew went slowly onward, his foot falling softly upon the tufts of bent grass that were by the side of the stony road. He was walking carefully, as if not wishing to break that solemn stillness. There was not even a bird's song to break it; nor one thread of curling smoke for a sign of human life.

"Certainly this is perfect," Noel Bartholomew said, stopping for a moment on the top of a heathery ridge, beyond which a narrow stony valley sloped to the south-west. The road led across the end of the valley; but the artist turned a little to the left, and sat down upon one of the grey scarred stones, with his feet upon the moss and the small beautiful bent grass which grows between the heather.

The unopened letter was still in his hand. "I wish I could write as well as Montacute does!" he said musingly. "It is a separate distinction in a man's life to have a handwriting like that. It is like having a good name, or a reputation for some special skilfulness."

Still he did not open the letter. It was sealed ; and the seal bore Mr. Montacute's crest, a defiant-looking eagle with a scroll in its beak. So far Bartholomew had made no attempt to break the seal. Whatever it might be that deterred him, it was some sufficiently strong and prevailing thing.

He was still sitting upon the low grey stone, leaning back against a projecting bank of heather and grass, noting the russet-red of the withered heath-bells of the year that had been, and the pink-tipped petals of the one daisy near him of the year that now was. He watched the daisy long, watching it as Dante Rossetti must have watched his " woodspurge with the cup of three," recognizing its apparent simplicity, its real complexity, its infinite mystery of being. The little flower, with its fringe of petals and its yellow centre, was to the full as incomprehensible as the fate which had driven him on to dread the opening of a letter that was certain at least to be written in courteous terms. . . . So thinking, he gathered the pink-tipped daisy.

Then, at last, he essayed to open the letter.

Through all other thoughts and enjoyments, and quick vivid impressions, he had been steadily recognizing the fact that the moment must come. His face grew rigid to his own consciousness ; his grey lips closed firmly ; his hand was upon the envelope. . . . What was it that arrested him, stayed him? . . . Was it a sudden cry close at hand? It was only a plover's cry, a long sharply-wailing note, "Weke-aye-woëke! Weke-aye-woëke!"

After a little while the beautiful thing with its curling crest, and its white and green, and blue-black feathers, came tumbling by in its insane flight, like a bird with broken wings and uncertain instincts about its destination. Presently there came another and another, and the wailing melancholy cry seemed to come from every part of the lone wide moor, "Weke-aye-woëke! Weke-aye-woëke!"

No other sound could have broken the stillness so greatly, and yet have harmonized with it so completely. Bartholomew sat with his thin nervous hand upon the letter ; close to him a tall red spiral dock was quivering slightly in the hardly perceptible air that

stirred upon the upland. Was there any refreshment in the air for the grey pallid man who was lying with his head among the withered heather-bells? Did he still feel the charm of that wild plaintive cry that was upon the moorland hills about him everywhere?

All through the day the plovers went on crying in the soft sunshine, “Weke-aye-woëke! weke-aye-woëke! weke-aye-woëke!”

## CHAPTER XVI.

### “ FULL IN THE SMILE OF THE BLUE FIRMAMENT.”

“ And calmest thoughts come round us—as of leaves  
Budding—fruit ripening in stillness—autumn suns  
Smiling at eve upon the quiet sheaves,  
\* \* \* A sleeping infant’s breath—  
The gradual sand that through an hour-glass runs,  
A woodland rivulet—a poet’s death.”

KEATS.

THE sound of the church bells came pealing across the Marishes as the clock struck ten, bursting upon the still sunny air like a psalm of joy and gladness. Genevieve was out among the snowdrops and the rich, green, bursting leaves of the lilies. She had thrown a little shawl of cream-white wool over her black silk dress; her straw garden hat was in her hand.

“ What *can* ha’ got the master? ” said

Keturah, coming to the door with her surprised eyes more surprised than ever. "D'ya think he's gone to Usselby Hall?"

"That, precisely, is what I am thinking," Genevieve replied, with a sweet, patient, satisfied smile. "And I am also thinking that I will come in and have some breakfast, since it is too late now to go to church."

The breakfast was soon over; then Genevieve sat down and read the services for the day. It was the second morning of the month, and the psalms began with a burst of thanksgiving that seemed like an echo of the gladness that had come upon the land with the sound of the pealing bells. The bells had ceased now; silence reigned once more, silence broken only by the rush of wings and the carolling of sweet, grateful, praise-giving birds.

Then again Genevieve went out, and sauntered up and down from the tiny garden to the stile at the end of the weedy stubble-field. No fear touched her, no impatience. The longer her father stayed the more certain was it that he stayed at Usselby. What so easy to understand as George Kirkoswald's glad-

ness to have him, and eagerness to keep him ? What so good and pleasant to the imagination as the meeting of those two, her father and—her friend ?

“ That is what he will be always,” she said to herself, sitting down on the top step of the stile. The celandine was wide open to the sun now. The crowing of the cock in the farmyard at Hunsgarth came dreamily through the air ; the pigeons were pecking about in the stubble. Far away in the blue distance a few white-sailed ships were seen.

“ That is what he will always be,” she went on saying ; “ a friend who will help me, and teach me, and make my life fuller and sweeter, and more complete than a lonely life can ever be.” It amazed her now to think how contented she had been with her loneliness ; how little she had cared for that finer and more perfect sympathy and confidence for which she yearned now. She had hardly yet tasted of this greater good ; not once had there been an hour of unreserve, of communion of thought and feeling, of that subtle interchange of the best elements of two natures, that “ running of two souls into

one," which is the essence of all worthy and valuable human intercourse everywhere. This was yet to be.

Genevieve had no doubts now. Up to the measure of her capacity she could gauge his. She knew that there was more in him, more of character, of power, of goodness, than he had ever made evident by word or deed. And she was not over-estimating him. She had not always counted him perfect. But for this illness of his which had drawn her entirely to tenderness, to forgiveness, it is possible that the misgivings she had had might have crystallized and taken form. She knew that she had blamed him in her own mind for his want of trust and confidence in her; nay, she had blamed him openly, and had told him openly that he had failed—failed in insight, failed to give her credit for that larger grasp of things which is not always denied to a woman.

And for a long time she had been unable to shake off the effects of that shock she had received in the drawing-room at Yarrell Croft. Time and thought—the softened thought that had come when George Kirkoswald was lying

on the border-lands of existence—had all but erased the dark vestige of that day; but Genevieve was making up her mind steadily to a fuller and more complete erasure of all the marks and stains which that experience had left. “It will be better to speak of it,” she said as she sat there, looking up at the little white sunny clouds that were drifting slowly away. “It will be better to tell him that now I understand, now I see how he could be drawn for a while to one like that, and then find out that he had been drawn by an illusion, that his soul was untouched, his spirit uninfluenced, his truer and higher self left lonelier than ever. All that I will tell him; and I will ask him to forgive—to forgive me, to forgive her. . . . I can forgive her myself now, since God has been so very good.”

So Genevieve Bartholomew was thinking as she sat there in the calm Sunday sunshine. It was evident now that her father was going to stay at Usselby for dinner. She knew that there was no one who could have come over with a note or message except old Ben Charlock, and it was quite within the possibility of things that Ben would raise some

objection if he were asked to go so far for so slight a reason on a Sunday morning. "Besides, my father will be sure that I shall guess all about it," she said to herself, opening a copy of the "Spiritual Voices" that was lying in her lap, and turning to its pages for that aliment which the soul needs day by day as certainly as the body needs the bread by which it lives.

And still upon Langbarugh Moor the sun was shining softly, and the weeds and the white dead grasses were glittering and quivering in the light air. Now and then a bird stirred in the whin-brake; a wood-pigeon swept by to the fir-copse; always the plovers went on crying, crying sadly, calling wildly, drifting hither and thither on uncertain, erratic wing. No other sound broke the wondrous stillness as the hours of noon went by. The peace that was on the upland was as the peace that is in the space between two worlds.

When the shadows were beginning to lengthen, a tall dark figure came slowly up between the stunted oak-trees that made a landmark on the north-west of the moor—a

graceful, noticeable figure, richly dressed, and moving slowly, languidly, as became the languid afternoon.

It was Diana Richmond. What made the Sunday a heavier day than other days at Yarrell Croft? What hint of early training, of hereditary instinct, of striving spirit, prevailed to the point of producing weariness, discomfort, dissatisfaction with all things that were or had been?

Nothing could have been more out of keeping with the dreary barren moorland than the appearance of Miss Richmond, as she swept between the sombre whin-brakes and the great scarred boulders that seemed to speak so plainly of some ancient cataclysm, some clashing of Nature's strongest forces. They did not speak to her; nothing spoke to her up there. The monotony of Langbarugh Moor was as the monotony of her own drawing-room; and the moor had the disadvantage of being less becoming as a background to a figure dressed with all the finish and elegance that the toilette of a fashionably-dressed woman demands. Still there was room to move, and to a woman

who can move gracefully movement is a pleasure though there be no witness of her gracefulness. Diana Richmond liked to know that if any one had been there her rich bronze silk dress, with its trimmings of velvet of the same changeful colour, was a thing in perfect taste. She liked to watch it changing from green to gold in the sunlight, and deepening to a bronzed brown where it fell into shadow ; and she was aware that her large Rembrandt hat, which was made of the same velvet, and trimmed with curling feathers of the same varying tints, was almost a picture of itself. These were new satisfactions, and they added to the old—the old pride, the old pleasure in her own great beauty. Surely to be very beautiful must be to have little left to desire in this world !

This was not always Miss Richmond's opinion ; it was not her opinion this afternoon as she walked alone on the edge of the moorland. Her brother had gone to stay for a few days at Burland Brooms, where Sir John Burland lived, who was a widower, and who was—so the world was saying—a warm admirer of Miss Richmond's. But nothing

within her had responded to his admiration so far. "It is strange," she said, half-audibly, "it is strange even to myself that I should never have cared truly but for one man, and that that one man should be an insignificant-looking artist of no particular birth, and no particular attractiveness. It is stranger still that I can move him to neither love nor hate, to neither liking nor scorn. I have moved other men to all these; but I cannot touch him—him I cannot touch. If fate should give me the power to crush him to his death, I should not move him from his cold indifference."

She was still sweeping languidly onward over the moor, treading on the little edges of turf, listening to the rustling sound of her silk dress upon the dead yellow bracken. Why should she go onward? Why should she go back? When she stopped a moment on the overhanging brow of the moor she perceived that she had already gone as far as it would be wise to go with the sun so low upon the purple hills in the distance. She was nearer now to Usselby Hall than she was to Yarrell Croft. What if she were to meet

George Kirkoswald? She had heard that he might go out for awhile any day now, if he chose. She had no particular wish to meet him, neither had she any dread of meeting him. A woman who is mistress of the elusive can hold her own under any circumstances.

She gave a little sigh as she gathered up some folds of her dress and turned to go. Even an encounter with Kirkoswald might have been better than this dreary solitude.

Going back is always dreary when you are alone. Miss Richmond lingered a moment. The little, rough heathery valley, with the grey boulders all down its sides seeming as if they must topple over, was close at her left. The low sun caught the upper edge of it, making a margin of gold. Something there, just between the gold and the purple-brown, arrested her, something that was lying half across one of the whitest and smallest of the rough scarred stones.

It was a figure—certainly it was a dark figure that was lying so stirlessly there.

It was not far away, and she saw plainly that it was none other than Noel Bartholomew, who had fallen asleep in the still

sunshine of the Sunday afternoon. So it was that she smiled ; wondering in what seemly and graceful and delicate way she might awaken him.

Already she was moving toward him with a sweet, soft smile on her curved lips, a faint blush on her cheek, and a glad subdued light in her beautiful eyes. Perhaps the mere rustle of her silken folds upon the withered heather would suffice to awaken him from his sleep.

She came nearer, near enough to see the placid, easeful look that was almost a smile upon the face of the sleeping man. The yellow sunlight lingered upon it, so that no unusual pallor was there. Was it the sunlight that made him look so noble, so beautiful, so grand ? Was it the sunlight that had taken away all trace of care, all record of contact with human lowness, and narrowness, and hardness ? Was it the light of this every-day sun that had so lifted him, even in seeming, so far above himself, above her recognition of him, above her power of comprehension and appreciation ?

Perhaps he might be dreaming. Who

could say through what worlds a soul like his might not wander when sleep freed it for a while from the bonds of physical existence ? Who could say what converse this man's spirit might be holding even as his body lay there upon the barren moor ?

Such was the presence of him as he lay that even Diana Richmond was moved to thoughts like these. The complacent smile faded from her lips imperceptibly. She sat down on a stone near him, gently, quietly, as if fearing to awaken him.

Some time she sat watching there. She did not dream once of what he might think if he were to awaken, and find her there by his side. She did not try for one moment to imagine what she should say or do, or how she should look when he awakened.

Long afterwards she knew that from the first moment when she had seen his face, she had had no thought of his awakening. Yet she could never tell when or how fear had entered into her heart. Was it fear ? It was so soft a thing, so beautiful, and it came so gently. This could not be fear.

Still she sat watching there. The sunlight

had left the face, left it in paleness and wan-  
ness ; but still in great and reverent nobleness.  
His head was lying back upon the dead  
heather ; the grey hair stirred in the light  
wind that came like a sigh across the moor.  
In his hand there was a letter—an unopened  
letter ; and upon it a daisy—one little closed,  
drooping, pink-tipped daisy.

Presently Miss Richmond, still moving  
with all gentleness and quietness, knelt down  
by his side. Then she called him softly by  
his name.

"Will you not speak to me ?" she said in  
a soft whisper, and with lips almost as pallid  
as the lips before her. "Will you not speak  
one word ? Will you not let me tell you all  
the truth ? If you will let me tell you all,  
then I will go away. I will never see you  
any more. I will never vex you any more ?"

Then she waited, listened ; but the only  
answer was the cry of a solitary plover far  
off across the moor.

As she waited she read the superscription  
on the letter ; and she recognized Mr. Monta-  
cute's handwriting. She herself had received  
a letter exactly similar in appearance only

the evening before. And Diana Richmond recognized more than the lawyer's handwriting. . . . She knelt there as a man might kneel by the friend he had slain by an ill-calculated blow in a moment of sudden anger. She had not the excuse of anger ; but the excuse of love. She uttered no cry. She was struck far beyond the display of passionate emotion.

And still the sun went on sinking : it was behind the hill-top now ; and darkness was coming up from the dark lone sea. She must do something. What could she do ? she asked herself, feeling yet no stir of terror though she was alone there, on Langbarugh Moor, with one who might not stir nor speak.

At last she touched the hand—the hand near to her that held the dead daisy ; and it was a very terrible thing to touch.

When she rose to her feet she reeled as with a sudden faintness, but the light breeze came with the effect of an ice-cold wind ; and she shuddered, and the faintness passed.

She must leave him—leave him lying there ; and she must go to Usselby. She was nearer to George Kirkoswald's home than to her

own ; and some other unrecognized reasonings, or rather instincts, influenced her to this decision. She would go there, and then—what would happen then ? . . . Miss Richmond could see no farther at that moment.

She stood awhile with her face buried in her hands : and presently with a great effort she stooped and kissed the broad forehead from which the wind was lifting the grey hair. Then she took the little withered daisy with its limp stalk, hiding it in her dress as she turned and fled. And as she went the plover cried again upon the moorland ; and the wailing, plaintive note followed her like the cry of some dark, accusing spirit whose voice would be in her ears for evermore.

All the way, by whin-brake and briar-brake, and down by the pine-woods of Usselby, that cry still came. To her life's end it would come, and it would be full of pain, and dark terror, and mingled accusations and threatenings. To her life's end the plover's note would be to her what the scent of the Basil-plant must have been always to those brothers

of Florence—a thing that no self-banishment nor other self-inflicted suffering might deprive of its remorseless power.

And while Diana Richmond was hurrying downward from the moor with white stricken face and trembling form, Genevieve Bartholomew was leisurely drawing the curtains, and lighting the lamps, and placing her own little table by her father's chair. "Surely he will come back to me for his cup of afternoon tea," she was saying. "He can never think that Jael's tea is as good as mine. . . . I shall scold him a little when he comes back."

## CHAPTER XVII.

“ THITHER OUR PATH LIES : WIND WE UP THE  
HEIGHTS.”

“ He has outsoared the shadows of our night.  
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again.  
From the contagion of the world’s slow stain  
He is secure ; and now can never mourn  
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey, in vain.”  
SHELLEY, *Adonais*.

THERE is often something that is both delightful and memorable about the state of convalescence. Men unused to illness find recovery from illness to be bewilderingly pleasant, and are sometimes tempted to make the most of it. For this, however, certain conditions are indispensable. A quiet sunny house between the moor and the sea is good ; a comfortable reading-chair, and an abundance

of books, new and old, are good ; to have perfect peace of mind about your worldly affairs is good ; and to know that there is some one whose greatest earthly desire is your recovery is also good. But even these are not all-sufficient. Solitude is apt to pall at such times ; and to have no mother or sister, no wife or daughter, for your ministering angel, does not tempt you to linger in a state of which the chief delight is the delight of being ministered to. Still, even under these conditions, convalescence is not without its satisfactions.

That bright, calm Sunday had certainly seemed to George Kirkoswald to be—

“One of those heavenly days that cannot die.”

Though he had not been out of doors he had sat by windows open to the pine-woods, and the Marishes, and the dark, lone, blue sea, where the white sails were flitting. Sea-gulls had come up, flapping by on heavy wing, resting in great flocks upon the newly-ploughed lands ; busy sparrows were darting about the gardens with swift unanimous whirr ; the white-edged holly-trees shone out against the ancient yews ; the first soft, sweet

thrush note came up from the boughs of the mulberry-tree, and at times a tiny wren piped as he flew from shrub to shrub on the green terraces.

To be able to lie quite still, listening, thinking, dreaming, yielding to the influence of the day and the hour, is to attain one of the highest peaks of earthly felicity. Wordsworth attained it, and, what is more, he kept it, lived in it. That is the secret of his charm for us who are hurrying through the burden and heat of the day, and to whom the primrose by the river's brim is not even a yellow primrose, but the *cachet* of a great political party.

All the forenoon George had tried to read; in the afternoon he had permitted himself to write a letter—the first letter he had written to Genevieve Bartholomew.

For days past the yearning to write, to pour out all that he had to say, had been growing within him. He told himself that it would be both better and easier to write than to wait and speak face to face. He could express himself, his love, his sorrow, his hope, more fully if he might put them all

on paper ; and he was just in the mood to do it now. His illness had been like a sharp dividing line in his life. On the one side there were all the old mistakes, the old sufferings and emptinesses. The one good thing on that other side was the day in Birkrigg Gill ; and the influence of that day was above and outside the line that severed all else. Nothing that had happened had really lessened or impaired it. He knew that now—he had known it all through his illness. Even in his saddest and most desponding moments Genevieve's face had come before him just as he had seen it last on that evening when he had spoken of going abroad. The sudden pallor, the sudden silence, the sudden intense yet subdued emotion had had more meaning for him later, than at the time. And he could never forget the look which had been on her face and in her eyes when he had said, with a twofold meaning in his words—

“ Shall I come down again, Miss Bartholomew ? ”

And she had replied—

“ Yes ; come again before you go away.”

Even as she spoke he had known that her

generous, truthful words had prevented his going at all ; and he had known also that this was not the most they had done. Her simple desire, so simply expressed, had meant a thousand things to him since then, and each one of them was as precious as it was nameless and undefined. All this, and more, was behind the mood that he was in as he sat there writing, pouring out his highest and best and most passionate aspirations with the full certainty that they would be understood and responded to.

“ I’ve writ all day, yet told you nothing,” he said, thinking he was near the end of his letter. But that was a long way from the end. Not till the light began to fade, and Jael came in with a cup of tea and a pair of candles, was the envelope sealed and laid ready for Noel Bartholomew to take down to Netherbank the next day.

This was hardly done when the heavy knocker sounded upon the hall door, clang-ing with a wild impetuousness that was strangely startling on such a day, and at such an hour. George rose to his feet as by an impulse of alarm ; and Jael and old

Ben went to the door together. The dim passages seemed to be filled with a great and sudden dread.

From the door of his own room George Kirkoswald saw that it was Miss Richmond who stood there in the dark blue twilight.

“What is it?” he said gently, going up to her, taking her hand, and drawing her into the house. “What has happened? Some one is ill. Come in here—into my study. You are ill yourself. Pray come in!”

For a moment Diana only looked into his face with eyes set in terror, and pallid lips that tried to speak, and could not. Her features were distorted, her hair was dropping over her dress, her hands were clasped tightly together. Words came at last, broken, imploring, half-coherent words.

“Send them,” she said. “Send your people to the moor. . . . You will let them bring him here? . . . You will let them bring him to your house?”

“Is it your brother?” George said, placing her in a chair, and standing by her, ready to soothe and support her if he might. “It is Cecil? Is he ill? Whereabouts on the moor

is he? But I will go myself, and you shall stay here. Tell me, if you can, exactly where he is?"

"It is not Cecil," Miss Richmond said, with increase of consciousness, increase of agony in her expression. "It is not Cecil. . . . I could wish that it were. . . . It is—it is Noel Bartholomew. It is he. And he is dead. He is lying there alone. And he is dead!"

No response was made. A minute or two later George Kirkoswald and Charlock went hurrying up to the top of Langbarugh Moor in the still evening together. The young crescent moon was hanging in the clear sky; the plovers were still wailing upon the up-land. There was no other sound, only the wailing of the plovers.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

“EXPECTING STILL HIS ADVENT HOME.

“ For now her father’s chimney glows  
    In expectation of a guest ;  
    And thinking ‘ this will please him best,’  
She takes a riband or a rose.”

TENNYSON.

THE people whose business and gladness it has been to help in the progress of humanity by means of things written, have said much of human love. First has come the love between man and woman—first and last. Then something has been said—not too much—of the love of a mother for her children. The love that may be, that often is, between father and daughter has been, comparatively speaking, neglected. Cordelia is less popular

as a heroine than Juliet, Ophelia, or Desdemona.

And yet this love is very precious, very potent. Though a woman know no other love, she shall yet lack none of love's best beatitudes.

So long as there is one to whom she may say "Father," so long that name shall stand between her and ill she then may not even dream of; so long will protection be hers, and sheltering care; so long will there be one to understand and believe in her; to defend if defence be needed; to spare her all that no woman who stands alone may ever be spared till humanity shall have touched the beginning of a new spiritual era.

While he is there—the father—all that his presence means, so far as contact with the outer world is concerned, may be unrecognized. It is when he is gone that awakening comes, and amazement; then that a woman learns to cry in anguish, "Oh, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do! not knowing what they do!"

Not knowing what they do, not caring what they do, so they may but live their

own narrow, self-bounded life untouched by any consequence of their deed upon other lives.

But even while the father is still in the house, still in his own chair, at his own fireside, it is felt to the full that it is good to have him there. The merest imagination picturing the empty chair shall strike you with the force of steel.

All that soft, bright Sunday Noel Bartholomew's chair by the fireside at Netherbank had been unoccupied: and more than once, as the day went on, the look of it had touched upon Genevieve's heart strangely for the moment, bringing slight chills, causing vague shadows, and sending far-darting thought out into the sombre and subtle regions of fateful mystery.

It was not thought that could be dwelt upon or handled. Half our mental discursiveness is of too quick and elusive a kind to be grasped, or followed, or reduced to exact thinking.

Many a sudden-seeming shock has found us half-prepared, not knowing how we were prepared. The unintelligible and invisible

makes itself intelligible by moments at a time; so, when we know it not, it attests itself to us, and we feel for ever afterward that the actual, as we see it and know it, is not a fixed quantity; and the circumscribing lines of material knowledge come to be perplexingly uncertain.

It is when we are thus weighed upon by an impending event that we make such pathetically unconscious efforts to ignore its preponderance. The little acts of life are done more carefully, as if to make sure that they matter much. A woman finds herself singing a light-hearted little song unawares, or humming over a favourite waltz; a man goes about whistling; or he chooses a better cigar, and smokes it with attention to his enjoyment. We have all of us tried to cheat ourselves so on occasion.

Genevieve had time and opportunity for many little self-deceptions. It was Keturah's “Sunday out;” and, as usual, she had stayed to tea, so that Genevieve was quite alone from the middle of the afternoon—alone, but not till after dark in any loneliness. Then it was that she began to murmur little tunes

softly, and to walk up and down the tiny room from the door to the window listeningly. Her father would be quite aware that she was alone, with no human being within half a mile of the cottage.

When the sun had really gone down, and the silver moon was up, gusts of wind began to come round the house; and they came rather wildly, and there was a chillness in the air which was sufficient excuse for piling up the pine-knots till they blazed in the cheeriest fashion they knew of. Prince Camaralzaman woke up to Genevieve's singing, and joined in with a sleepy chirp or two; the kettle was joining in with a will. The little tea-table was still by the armchair, with the cup and saucer of real crown-Derby upon the tray. This had been Miss Craven's gift to Mr. Bartholomew on his birthday, and it had been given with the express desire that it should not be "kept to look at."

As a matter of course, all causes possible and impossible that might underlie her father's long absence entered into Genevieve's brain as she paced the little room in her growing loneliness. The one great dread

that seemed to be taking root was the dread that some change, some relapse, had come upon George Kirkoswald. This was but natural, and it was consistent. If there was any darker dread it would surely be kept behind.

Still the time went on. The young moon sank over the edge of Langbarugh Moor; the gusts swept up the reedy Marishes; the kitchen clock ticked loudly, monotonously. Would nothing break that strange stillness, that heavy silence?

Ah! there, at last, there was a footstep on the stubble-field. Genevieve drew the curtain back so as to throw a light outside; then she ran to the door, and stood peering into the darkness made visible.

“It is you, my father? It is you?” she cried, with the gladness of a little child, and holding out her two white hands to the dark figure that was coming nearer. . . . It had come, and was grasping her hands with a strong, kind grasp, and was leading her into the house, understanding, pitying all her sudden silence, her wordless wonder and dismay.

“ You did not expect to see me, my child ? ”  
Canon Gabriel said, speaking with a new  
and grave gentleness. “ But come in, dear ;  
come in. The evening is very chill ; come  
indoors.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

## IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

“Alas! I only wish'd I might have died  
 With my poor father: wherefore should I ask  
 For longer life?  
 O, I was fond of misery with him;  
 E'en what was most unlovely grew beloved  
 When he was with me. O, my dearest father,  
 Beneath the earth now in deep darkness hid,  
 Worn as thou wert with age, to me thou still  
 Wert dear, and shall be ever.”

SOPHOCLES, *Oedipus Coloneus*.

THEY went into the little room where the pine-knots were blazing; the tea-tray standing by the armchair cosily; the footstool drawn quite near.

“You shall sit there,” Genevieve said to the Canon, moving the chair forward in nervous unconsciousness. “And tell me what has brought you to Netherbank on

Sunday evening during service time—tell me quickly, please.”

She spoke strangely, trying to speak quietly, trying to speak lightly. Her lips quivered, not knowing whether they should smile or no.

“It is a little out of the usual order of things, is it not?” said the Canon, taking her two hands in his. She had knelt down by his side, and was resting with one elbow on the broad arm of the chair. Kneeling so she could look into the old man’s face, and try to read all that he might hesitate to speak. Assuredly he had that to say that might make him hesitate.

“It is a little out of the usual order of things,” he said, keeping the girl’s hands in his, and looking outwards, beyond the boundary of anything he saw. “My new curate, Mr. Summerhayes, is taking the evening service entirely, and that is not usual. I happened to have stayed at home, and that is not usual. Then there came a visitor to the Rectory, and the visitor was Mr. Kirkoswald. . . . It has all been unusual.”

“Mr. Kirkoswald!” exclaimed Genevieve,

for the moment surprised out of all fear.  
“ He is able to go out ? ”

“ He has been out this evening for the first time.”

“ Why should he have chosen to go out in the evening ? ” the girl asked, conscious again of hidden dread, and some bewilderment.

“ He did not choose, dear. He went on an errand of mercy.”

Then, for the first time, the Canon looked into Genevieve’s eyes, while she looked into his, reading there nothing to put an end to fear.

There was a distinct and impressive pause. The flames of the fire went up with a rhythmical beating ; the clock ticked audibly, the Canon’s grasp tightened upon the girl’s white hands.

“ And that errand of mercy concerned me ? ” she said at last, turning her beautiful dark eyes, and her pale, finely-cut face toward the old man again.

“ Yes, my child,” he said, feeling and knowing that he need dread no scene ; that the woman who knelt at his feet was one who might have gone to her death as Agnes

and Perpetua went to theirs ; and who therefore might meet the tidings of the death of him who was nearest and dearest to her with something of the same courage with which she would have met the sentence of her own death, with something of the same martyr heroism, something of the same Christian fortitude.

“ Yes, my child,” he said, “ it concerns you, even as it concerns himself. His emotion was such that he could not come here to-night. He asked me to come. . . . He has asked me more than that. . . . He has asked me if I would be to you a friend . . . a father.”

So it was that knowledge came—the knowledge that she had no other father.

\*       \*       \*       \*       \*

No cry went upward. No word broke the silence.

“ I tell you, hopeless grief is passionless ;  
That only men incredulous of despair,  
Half-taught in anguish, through the midnight air  
Beat upward to God’s throne in loud access  
Of shrieking and reproach.”

For a long time Genevieve lay with her head on Canon Gabriel’s arm, stricken, but

not unconscious ; bereaved, yet knowing all that she might then know of her bereavement. All that she might know then. No bereaved woman ever knows all in that first moment when death has but just closed the eyes that were ever open to watch and guard her ; but just sealed the lips that were ever eloquent at her need.

It is Time—Time, the healer of other griefs, that tears open this wound afresh at every point of contact with a hard and blind, a self-seeking and ungenerous world.

The arrangement is merciful. If foresight were added to the anguish of loss, then were grief beyond consolation. The arrangement that denies consciousness of aught save that one form lying peacefully in the arms of Azrael is most merciful.

After a time Genevieve raised her head and looked with tearless eyes into the Canon's face again, and spoke with quivering lips—

“ I have not misunderstood ? ” she said, speaking as people speak who awake from the effect of some anæsthetic that has confused the senses and changed the voice. “ I have not misunderstood ; my father is . . . ”

“Your father has fallen asleep, my child.”

And even as the old man spoke, the words that Noel Bartholomew had used only the night before came as if she heard them again—

“Remember your wish, dear, when you know that I am sleeping better.”

Had he known? Had he felt that such great weariness as his, weariness of life, of work, of pain, of disappointment, had he felt that such weariness was significant of coming rest? Even as she asked herself the question she knew that he had felt it; that he had known it long. He had prepared himself for this quiet falling asleep.

She did not ask more questions; but Canon Gabriel wisely thought that it would be better to tell her then all that there was to be told; then, while her stun was greater than her sorrow; then, before sensitiveness to the sound of her father’s name, to the mention of aught connected with him, had come upon her, as so surely it would come.

She listened very patiently while the Canon told his tale, heightening the halo of quiet spiritual beauty that was about it. She spoke

of her own last sight of her father, of how she had watched him going up to the moor, gliding away out of the shadow into the full light of the morning sun. She had known nothing of the letter that had been in his hand. The Canon told her of it, and she felt its significance as a factor in the thing that had happened. None could know as she knew how her father had shrunk from all save the gentlest and kindest human intercourse; how he had suffered from even the unthinking, and how any signs of evil will had preyed upon him "like night-fires on a heath." None could know as she knew; yet both Canon Gabriel and George Kirkoswald had partly perceived the meaning and weight of that one small incident. The letter was in Kirkoswald's hands now, and it was still unopened, the Canon told her.

"Then it shall remain unopened," she replied. "Since he never knew what it contained, I will never know. It shall not be opened; and *they* shall know that it was never opened."

"You are speaking of Mr. Richmond?"

"I am speaking of all who have done this,"

the girl said, rising to her feet, and uplifting her clasped hands passionately. "I am speaking of all who have done this—who have done my father to death. . . . There is a word, I will not use it, but all my life I shall know that there is no other word. . . . My father! my father! my father! all my life that word will ring in my ears at the thought of you!"

Yet no tears came. Her eyes were beginning to ache and burn with the hot unshed tears that were behind them; and her hands were very chill. The Canon took them again in his, and drew her gently to his side.

"Sit down, dear," he said with that gentle loftiness in his persuasive voice that none could hear and resist. "Sit down beside me, and let us speak of him—of your father. Let us think together of what he would say to us if he might come back for an hour. If, as it is thought, he fell asleep quite early this morning, this day will have been to him better than ten thousand days of such existence as ours. Think if he could come back ennobled in heart and brain, illumined, enrapt in the atmosphere of that world where life is

love; upraised far, far above all that bound and warped and narrowed his vision here; imagine him here by us, listening to us, replying to us. . . . Can you think what reply he would make to that bitter cry you uttered just now?"

No answer came. Genevieve's white lips were closed in pain. Only her eyes betrayed that she had heard, that she understood.

"Would he not remind us," the Canon went on, "of that last word uttered on the Cross eighteen hundred years ago, yet echoing across the world till now for our example:—

'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!'

So your father might speak in large pity and comprehension of *your* weakness, of your excusable feeling. I cannot think that that feeling would be his. Had he not gone away, had he merely had an attack this morning similar to the one he had before, and then recovered, I cannot believe that he would for a moment have blamed any one. I think he knew himself to be less strong than others believed him to be; I think Dr. Armitage feared some such sudden-seeming event as

this for him. It is more than probable that he had had a sleepless night; he went out without having tasted food of any kind; and he climbed to the last height of Langbarugh Moor. What so certain as exhaustion? What so likely as consequent sudden failure of vitality? . . . And what so painful to him now as to know that you are entertaining a wrong and unjust impression; to perceive, as he may indeed perceive, that the beauty, the stillness, the goodness that was about him on that sunny hill-top to the last moment, is all unnoted by you; that you are not thankful that he had no pain or fear; that he was, and, in a moment, was not, for God took him? How can we know what angels came and ministered to him there, closing his eyes in peace, and filling his spirit with peace, and bearing him away to be for ever in that peace that passeth all understanding? And is all this nothing to you, my child? Can you turn from it and see only a dark, embittering consequence of human error and mistake? At the worst it has been mistake. And have you no pity for those who have made it? If they should, unfortunately and unhappily,

take the same view that you are taking, does not your heart burn within you even now to go and comfort them? Do you not yearn to make them see how all their error and perversity and want of charity has been changed in the crucible—the *crux*—of God's lovingkindness till it has turned to peace and rest and perfect spiritual beauty? . . . Do not think that I under-estimate the pain of parting. I, who have said so many farewells, am not likely to do that. But it is not all pain, dear; and it is none of it bitterness; even to you this should not, it must not, be bitterness."

Genevieve listened, still with that look of something that was almost stupor on her face: it seemed to be deepening there. She kissed the old man's hand when he had spoken, then she looked into his eyes again.

"I will try to be good," she said simply. "I will try to be very good; and I will remember all that you have said. . . . But you will not leave me, Canon Gabriel? . . . You will not leave me here? . . . You will take me to Usselby? . . . You will let me

see him—you will let me sit beside him to-night?"

"I will certainly not leave you here, my child," the Canon said. "And for the rest, I have arranged it all with Mr. Kirkoswald. I cannot take you to Usselby to-night; that would not be possible; but you shall go there to-morrow. You are to go home with me now, if you will be so good, so kind to an old man as to let him have the privilege of taking care of you for awhile. . . . I have left instructions about your room with my housekeeper, Mrs. Knottingley; and the cab that brought me here will be back again directly. I told the man to come in an hour. Can you be ready? And your little maid, she will come with you, she will be useful and helpful to you, and she will not be a stranger. It was Mrs. Knottingley who thought of that."

Fortunately Keturah came in whilst they were still speaking, and the Canon went to her and told her all that might be told, and gave her such instructions as were needful. Genevieve gave none. She did not move or speak. When the Canon came back and sat

down again she listened, sitting beside him, pale and placid and still. The little table was there with the tea-tray on it ; the kettle was on the hearth ; the fire was dying down sadly, as if it knew that it would be re-lighted no more. All about the room the household treasures were lying—the pictures, the books, the flowers, the music. Were they all stricken with some strange change that they looked so ? Surely such things vary in expression, and respond to our own mood ! It was no hardship to leave these now. Keturah came in with swollen, tearful face, bringing Genevieve's cloak and hat, and she stayed to put them on, wondering at her mistress's unstained face, and bright, tearless, expressionless eyes. “ Did she see anything with those eyes ? ” the girl wondered. “ Was she hearing anything, understanding anything ? ”

They went out all together into the blue starlit night, Genevieve leaning on Canon Gabriel's arm. He felt the shudder that shook her whole frame when Keturah locked the cottage door, turning the key with a loud click. That one shudder was the only sign.

As she went along the stubble-field her

whole life there came back as in the flash that comes to the drowning man—her life and another life. . . . And this was the end, this sudden going forth in the darkness of the night with comparative strangers to seek a home in a strange house ; whilst he—he was there, far off among the pine-woods—nay, beyond the pine-woods, beyond the stars above them, gone beyond all touch and reach of hers for evermore.

What wonder that deep down in her heart there should be the cry—

*“ All Thy waves and storms are gone over me. The waters compass me about, even to the soul ; the depth is closed upon me ; the weeds are wrapped about my head ! ”*

## CHAPTER XX.

“LADY, YOU UTTER MADNESS AND NOT SORROW.”

“Behold me, for I cannot sleep,  
And like a guilty thing I creep  
At earliest morning to the door.”

TENNYSON.

THERE is in this north country of ours a proverb which says that “A bad tale gangs faster afoot than a good tale gangs a-horseback.” The sorrowful news of Noel Bartholomew’s death must have been conveyed by all swift means possible. By nine o’clock on Monday morning it was everywhere.

Now that he was gone where unkindness might pain him nevermore, nothing save kind words were said.

All that had been counted so inadequate in him was praised as the natural simplicity and humility of genius in all ages. His want of

manner became genuine unaffectedness ; his occasional brusqueness of speech was recognized as manful honesty ; his unsociableness was admitted to be the natural love of reclusive ways of living common to all workers or thinkers to whom work and thought are realities of life. One half of that sacred wine of charity and sympathy which was poured out to the memory of the dead man would have made his life dear to him—so dear that he had desired to live on, to work on.

“Not go to heaven, but linger here,  
Here on my earth, earth’s every man my friend.”

Did he hear now ? Did he know ?

There were people who would have given much to see him back again, had it been but for one half-hour. Those pathetic eyes were not without power now that they were closed, not to be opened again till the shadows flee away in the light of the Resurrection Morning.

This February day was, as the day before had been, bright, and sunny, and unusually mild. Not a twig stirred as George Kirkoswald rode down from Usselby to inquire how Genevieve was. He did not stay long at the Rectory. The Canon had not seen Genevieve-

since the previous evening. He could only say that he feared that the night had gone hardly with her. She had not slept ; and no tears had come to her relief.

"I promised to bring her to Usselby to-day," the old man went on to say. "I must keep my promise, and I think it may be well for her to see him. But I doubt—you will excuse my saying it—I doubt if she will be equal to seeing you."

"I should not dream of expecting it," George said. He was looking pale, and thin, and worn, and he was still very weak. The events of the previous day had shattered him, as they could not fail to have done.

Yet it was easy to see even now that his illness and his sorrow had not been all loss. There was surely gain in the clearer light that was in his dark, deep-set eyes ; in the look of larger peacefulness that was upon his broad thought-lined forehead, in the finer sympathy that was written in the lines about his firm mouth. The Canon could not but wonder and be glad as he watched him riding away from the Rectory.

Was George surprised, or was he not sur-

prised, when he rode over the brow of Langbarugh Moor to find that Diana Richmond was there, not twenty yards away from the road that led across the ridge? She turned and stood still, waiting there with her black dress dropped upon the heather, and her white face uplifted as the face of one who pleads with a judge for mercy. George dismounted, and held out his hand.

“I was coming to Yarrell,” he said, speaking gently and kindly. “I have been anxious to know how you were, very anxious. I was not able to come over last night.”

The only answer was a half-uncomprehending stare from eyes that were heavy with long weeping. George could see now that the white face before him had a strangely stricken look. It was not difficult to understand. For a woman who had so seldom seen death in any form the shock of yesterday must have been very terrible—all the more terrible because of her connection with the events of the past few weeks. He remembered; yet he felt only pity, and only pity was in his look.

“I was coming to you,” she said, speaking as if her voice had been pitched in some

other key since he heard it last ; changed to something natural, yet, in a sense unnatural, because sincere and true and tuned to accord with the realities of pain. "I was coming to you," she said ; "not to your house—not there ; but near it. I wanted to see you. . . . I could not have slept again if I had not seen you."

"I need hardly say that if there is anything I can do you may command me," George replied. One of his first and strongest instincts was the instinct that prompted him always to help any woman who might be in need of help. It was as natural to him as to breathe. The fact that between Diana Richmond and himself there had been relations not of the pleasantest did but make him more consciously anxious to be of use to her if he might. Therefore it was that he said so sincerely, "You may command me. . . . Cecil, I know, is not at home."

"No, and if he were it would not matter," Diana replied. "Cecil cannot help me. . . . No one can help me."

"If you are in trouble, and I fear you are," George replied, turning to look into her

face again, and speaking with that authoritative kindness that sits upon some men so naturally, "perhaps it would comfort you, do you some good, even to speak of it. . . . Don't think I am curious or inquisitive."

"I think nothing of that kind," interposed Diana. "I must speak of it. I must speak of it all, or go mad. This is no exaggeration. My brain has reeled, my consciousness has been shaken; more than once since last night I have been so near the border-land of madness that I have taken a book and tried to read to see if I could still understand the speech and meaning of sane men. . . . I know something of these things—of monomania. It has been in the family for generations—the tendency to dwell upon one idea till no other was possible. . . . I do not say this to excuse myself, to win your sympathy. I say it to explain myself, my reason for coming here. I do not wish to go mad, therefore I would not brood alone over things that may make me mad. . . . I want you to listen; that is all I want. I want you to be patient whilst I . . . whilst I tell you how I came to murder the man I loved."

Miss Richmond paused. They had been walking onward slowly; now she stopped and turned, looking into George Kirkoswald's face with conscious, grief-filled, earnest eyes—eyes that had no madness in them, though he looked for some, hearing the thing she said.

She understood. “No,” she went on, “I am quite sane. I think I must be saner than I have ever been, since I see my life so clearly. It has always seemed a confused life. I have drifted on in the dark from one rock to another. Now it is as if daylight had come, and shown me all I had passed over; or as if some one had watched me, and then had written my life that I might see what it had been. I see it as clearly as that, and the sight is—I cannot tell you what it is. When I think of words that face comes; it comes as I saw it yesterday, as I shall always see it—white, and cold, and grand, and dead. You will believe that then words have no meaning.”

They were still standing there in the soft sunshine. George had his hand on his horse's bridle, and at moments Bevis was impatient.

“Would it not be better if I were to go back with you to Yarrell ?” he asked. “ You are looking tired. It would be wiser of you to go home. You shall tell me all there.”

“Let me tell you here,” Diana said wistfully, and turning as if to go toward the place where she had sat so long the day before. “Let me speak here where the end came—the end of my deed. It may be that he can hear: it may be that he will forgive. . . . All night I have been asking him to forgive. I dare ask no other forgiveness till I feel his.”

They had come to the edge of the valley on the moor at last, the place where her attention had been arrested only a few hours before. She could see the stone lying in the sun. There was the little grassy knoll from whence *he* had plucked the pink-tipped daisy. Miss Richmond kept the withered daisy.

She sat down at some distance from the stone, but she could see it as she sat, and her eyes were drawn there half against her will, while George led his horse a few yards away and fastened the bridle to the bough of a dead thorn-tree. Then he came back and

sat down on the heather opposite to where Diana Richmond was sitting.

The same stricken look was on her face when she began speaking again; the same intense earnestness, and in her words there was the same grave directness.

“You are very good,” she said, looking into George’s face. “I have always known that, always felt it; sometimes I have hated you for it. Now I am glad of it, since it makes you patient, and sympathetic, and forgiving. Just now you are dreading to hear what I have to say, and yet you are sitting there as if there were nothing you desired so much as to hear me begin at the beginning of my life, and tell you every trivial and hateful detail of it all on to the end. . . . The end was yesterday.

“I will only go back to the beginning of that end, but that will take me back over one and twenty years, back to the time when I was a wilful, unthinking, yet intensely-loving woman of seventeen. I had never loved till then: I have never loved since. Plays and novels count it a virtue in a woman that she never loves but once, and

is true to one love for her whole long life-time. I may claim credit, then, for one virtue. But I was true against my will. I would have loved you if I could. But though Noël Bartholomew was married, and though I never saw him, I never forgot him, I never ceased to care for him, and to care passionately. And somehow I had always the feeling that my chance of winning him was not ended.

“ He had never loved me, never cared for me, and I have thought sometimes that it was his indifference that drew me to love him so wildly, so madly. . . . Once, it was before I knew that he was engaged to Clarice Brook, I told him here, on this very moor, that if I could not have his love I should die. I had no shame when I said it, and for that I have had no shame since. . . . If I had been a weak woman instead of a strong one, I should assuredly have died.

“ I need say no more of that time. I need not tell you that he was kind, and gentle, and honourable, and silent.

“ When I heard of his wife’s death I thanked Heaven. Then it seemed to me that

I might believe in a special Providence, a Providence that yet meant good towards me.

“And once again I thanked Heaven; it was when Noel Bartholomew came back to Murk-Marishes. I had been growing old, and my looks had begun to fade. In one week I grew young again, and, let me say it, more beautiful than I had ever been. A woman does not see when she is beautiful; she feels it. I felt myself growing beautiful again, and I felt myself capable of growing good.

“But the first time I met Noel Bartholomew—it was in his own house—my heart sank swiftly. He had loved, and his love was not dead. It would never die.

“And my love would never die.

“Instead of dying, it began to live as it had never lived before. It had always been a strong love; now it grew all at once to be a passionate love, or rather a passionate pain, a passionate suffering. . . . You will wonder why it was so. You will ask yourself what there was about Noel Bartholomew to win the affection of such a one as I am? If you asked me I could not answer you. If I said

it was his goodness, you would smile. If I said it was his kindness, you would not understand. No man ever does understand ; and yet it is the one thing that a woman can never resist —simple, thoughtful, unwearied, and unfailing kindness.

“ His kindness to me was only a suggestion of what it might have been if he had loved me. That was where the pain was ; the suggestion was so sweet, so haunting, so discontenting. . . . And yet I would rather have had his unkindness than the kindness of any man I have ever known.

“ And every time I saw him afresh the pain grew, and the trouble grew, and my love grew ; it grew to recklessness. More than once I all but told him of my love. I did tell him, only just not so directly that he had to refuse it in so many words. And yet he did refuse it, and he stung me, maddened me by his coldness, his calmness, his gentle, imperturbable apathy. Oh ! how it stung me, when I was so willing to give up all for him ! If he had asked me I would have gone to live under that thatched roof, and never once have hesitated to do it. And

yet he would not even stoop to take anything I had to offer. He could not, and I saw that he could not, and I grew more utterly reckless with every week that went by.

“There are certain days that stand out above the other days. There was the day the stone was laid in Soulsgrif Bight. I went down all gentleness and love and new humility, and filled with new yearnings. When I saw him there among the crowd my heart almost stood still. For a moment I was afraid of him coming to me, afraid to hear his voice, afraid to touch his hand. But he did not come ; he remained standing aloof, talking to farm-folks and to fisher-folks, and for a long time he was as if I had not been there. Then he passed me, raising his hat as he passed, and sending me a cold glance that went through me like a shiver ; and before I was aware of it all my love and gentleness was turned to a wild desire to be revenged, to give pain, to have satisfaction of some kind. It was his coldness, his aloofness, that changed me. I had borne so much ; I was bearing so much then.

“When I first heard that his daughter had

won your love—it was long before that day when I met her and you in Birkrigg Gill—I was glad—glad to the bottom of my heart. Now, I thought, he will be alone and lonely, now he will turn to me. But that hope died as soon as it was born, and the thought that others were happy all round me while I was left so miserably unhappy, was a constant goad, driving me on to do things I had never intended to do. It was in that mood I wrote that letter to you, and in that mood I answered you on that day in Soulsgrif Bight.

“I had another motive for doing some of the things I have done ; it has influenced me all through.

“It arose out of the idea that if Noel Bartholomew knew me better, he could not but learn to care for me more. I wanted to bring him to me, to hear him ask me for something, some explanation, some decision. If I could but bring him oftener to my side, let the errand be what it might, I should know how to make the most of it. If he asked a favour I should know how to delay the granting of it ; I should know how to yield at last ; I should know how to make my yielding effective.

"Caring so much as he did care for his daughter, I felt certain that, for her sake, he would come, that he would desire to know all the truth as to that long-past engagement. I did not dream that you would keep silence, or that the stupid world would keep silence. But I have noted that the world's silences are often as malignant in their results as its wildest speech.

"All the summer I watched for his coming; but he never came. I learnt afterward that he had even taken advantage of the few days I was absent to come over and take such sketches as were needful for the pictures Cecil had asked him to paint.

"From the first I was glad about those pictures.

"I am telling you all—I am telling you the worst; I am telling you that I am a woman capable of deliberate evil-will; I may even say that I believe there is in me an innate tendency to wrong-doing rather than to right; but am I *all* evil? . . . Say that I am not. I have known hours of inward strife, hours of relenting, hours when I have been afraid of myself, aghast at unexpected results. . . .

Tell me that I am not so evil all through, so utterly beyond hope, as I seem to myself to be!"

Miss Richmond paused, and she looked into George Kirkoswald's face; but her sudden question found him unprepared. He was dismayed and perplexed; and yet his dismay was half pity, half compassion. He did not speak; but Miss Richmond saw the look on his face, and went on again.

"Yes, I was glad from the first moment about those commissions," she said. "A whole series of suggestions hung about the idea that he was doing something that must bring us into contact of some kind; the kind might be made to depend on my will—or so I thought. But I never decided on any particular course; I let matters drift—only giving them a little turn this way or that when the chance came. But nothing happened as I expected it would happen.

"You know that I destroyed Mr. Bartholomew's letters to Cecil? . . . No? . . . Well, I did. There were three of them. I had the same motive. It was not to keep Noel Bartholomew in suspense, but to bring

him to Yarrell—to bring him there alone. He never came.

“The silence then was terrible. He was silent, and you were silent, and I did not know what was going on anywhere. I only believed that you were all together, all in sympathy, in felicity, and the thought made me feel as if the only end of my loneliness and misery would be fever and delirium.

“That was how I came to send the pictures back. Cecil did not know till afterward, and he was furious; but his fury availed nothing. Let me say it again, Cecil has been blameless all through, and he will suffer when he knows all. But his suffering will be nothing to mine—nothing. Mine can never end.

“You know all the rest; you know that on that day when you came to Yarrell to plead for your friend your plea was unsuccessful. You did not know the madness, the weariness, the disappointment that was consuming me. Had *he* come . . . But I cannot think of it. . . . I dare not think of it. . . . He will come no more. That is all I know; he will come no more. I cannot

realize it. I have to keep on saying it. . . . I shall never see him any more.

“On that same day, when I was in that same mood, his daughter came. You know what happened then ?”

“Yes,” George said, speaking calmly. “Yes ; I know. Do not let any thought of that distress you.”

“No ; that will not distress me—not now,” Diana replied. “I can never now have but one distress. . . . I only mention it to tell you that then again my motive was the same—to bring him to Yarrell, to hear him speak, and question, and plead in his quiet way. . . . Does it seem small, pitiful, inadequate ? Then you do not know yet what love is, if aught seem small to you that can touch it in any way.

“It is pitiful, it is inadequate—it is worse than these in the light of yesterday. But remember that yesterday had not then dawned ; remember that. I could not dream of yesterday.

“Can you even faintly understand now how I was driven on from point to point, goaded into fighting a battle over two paint-

ings that were precious to me because they were his work? Did you really think that I cared for the price? The price of the two of them was less than the price of the last new dress I had from Paris.

“I came at last to feel that if I might not have his love I would have his hate. Was I passing on to hatred myself? or is perverted love a worse thing than hatred? . . . Indifference I could not know, nor forgetfulness.

“At any moment, from first to last, one word from him, and I had fallen at his feet in regret, in remorse, in passionate desire to atone for all I had done.

“And now all possibility of atonement is gone.

“Have you any pity left for me? Can you think of yesterday, of the fate that drew me, half against my will, from my own drawing-room to the top of Langbarugh Moor, drew me there, face to face with the man I had loved so passionately, and who lay there with his death-warrant in his hand so peacefully—can you think of it, and not pity me, knowing that I know that it was my own hand that signed the deed?

“And yet I do not want your pity ; I did not come here to ask for that. I came to disburden myself of all this, to see if I might breathe more freely when I had spoken. . . . No, I do not want your pity. . . . I want nothing you can give. . . . Yet you might forgive me—you might forgive me the harm I have done to you. . . . To feel that you forgave me would ease my mind a little—it would ease me from this pain, and wretchedness, and racking misery a little.”

Miss Richmond had spoken with calmness, and yet her voice had betrayed more of the reality of her suffering than her words had done. She sat there now, twining her hands together with a grasp and movement that was almost convulsive. No doubt of the depth of her misery entered George’s brain for a moment. His thought was otherwise engaged, as it could not fail to be ; indeed, he was so greatly bewildered that he could hardly free himself to declare that forgiveness which was asked of him.

“Of course,” he replied, “of course, if it is needful for me to say in so many words that I forgive you any pain you may have caused

me, I will say it, and, I may add, that I can say it all the more readily and truly, because since you have spoken so plainly I cannot but understand. If you had not spoken, I confess that comprehension would have been difficult. All through I have been puzzled, pained ; and now I am pained for you ; but what can I say to comfort you ? ”

“ What do prison chaplains say to men condemned to die ? ”

“ I cannot even imagine,” George replied. “ But it is certain that they must speak differently to different men, and it must be easier far to speak to such as acknowledge their wrong-doing, and are filled with sorrow for it. But the comparison was not mine, and I do not for a moment accept it. There is no analogy whatever. If we were to be punished for the *consequences* of all our errors, then were we indeed a miserable race. And as for this sad, final consequence we speak of, I can tell you, for your comfort, that he who is lying there in my house has known for some time past that the end might come even as suddenly as it has come. Dr. Armitage has told me that. I did not know it ;

would that I had ! I would that I had but known it myself ! ”

“ Supposing that to be so—I do not doubt it—supposing his life to have been one of those that hang on a thread, yet see how the thread holds together in cases where there is peace, and freedom from anxiety and from all harassing things ! . . . And Noel Bartholomew’s first attack happened on that morning when the pictures were returned.”

“ I believe that was the first.”

“ And he has had none since—not till yesterday ? ”

“ Not to my knowledge.”

“ Then to my dying hour I shall know that the snapping of the thread was my deed.”

George Kirkoswald was silent a moment. With all possible desire to speak “ large, divine, and comfortable words,” he knew that there could be no divinity in words that were not truthful. On the face of it there seemed only too much probability that this self-accusation of Miss Richmond’s did not arise from an exaggerated view of the matter. And yet who could say ?

"It is *impossible* to say," he answered. "I know that even the uncertainty must be a most terrible thing to you, and I would that I might assure you that nothing that you have done could have had anything to do with the failure of his health; but you perceive I cannot do that. I can only say that no man nor woman may foresee the result of the smallest and most trivial-seeming action. A spoken word, a sentence in a letter, may have consequences we cannot even dream of. Our own acts pass beyond our own control, and take on a separate existence, and how far our responsibility may extend we cannot tell. We may blame ourselves for things of which the very angels hold us innocent. Where we know we are not innocent, we need not, thank Heaven! sink to despair. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, and no spirit was ever yet broken by the weight of what was counted as but venial sin. A great fall, or what seems such to us, is very often the beginning of any real spiritual rising."

An almost imperceptible light moved like a flash across Miss Richmond's face as George Kirkoswald said the last sentence.

“ You think that ? ” she said. “ You can say that though you are thinking of me ? ”

“ Yes,” George replied, looking up with the consciousness of the weight of the moment in his eyes. “ Yes, I can say that. Will you let me say more—will you let me say that I think your whole nature has needed some such powerful and determining influence as this ? Hitherto there has been no crisis in your life, nothing to awaken, to test your powers, nothing to bring you face to face with the stern realities of existence. . . . Your experience has been all of one kind, and therefore it is all the more likely that this sudden and trying calamity will, in the end, make for your peace.”

Miss Richmond sat in silence for another minute or two ; then she rose to her feet, and stood looking out with eyes that were slowly filling with tears toward the spot where the dark figure had lain but yesterday.

“ Thank you,” she said at last, holding out her hand as she spoke. “ Thank you. . . . If it all comes back again—if it is more than I can bear, will you let me write ? ”

“ I shall be glad if you will write,” George

replied, remembering all the loneliness and desolateness of her life. “If you will let me, I shall be glad to be your friend so long as you may need my friendliness.”

They parted then, Miss Richmond preferring to walk back over the moor alone. All the way the hot tears were dropping over her face, all the way the soothing words were ringing through her brain, all the way that seed-germ of higher hope was falling more deeply into the ground prepared for it. As yet it was no more than that, a tiny germ that might grow, and unfold, and make for good.

## CHAPTER XXI.

“THE DAY SO PLACID IN ITS GOING.”

“So bring him : we have idle dreams :  
This look of quiet flatters thus  
Our home-bred fancies : O to us,  
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

“To rest beneath the clover sod,  
That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
The chalice of the grapes of God.”

*In Memoriam.*

THEY had done all that might be done to make the stately yet shabby room seemly for the august Presence which had entered there. Jael, and the women who helped her, were of such as hand on the old traditions, and nothing was neglected. The crimson draperies of the room were replaced by white; white coverlets were folded in conventional ways; the toilet-glass was shrouded in fine

white linen. The flowers that George Kirkoswald had procured with such difficulty were disposed everywhere. He had arranged these himself; feeling a very agony of regret that this small service of love should be the last. . . . If he might only have known!

When he saw the carriage coming, bringing Canon Gabriel and Genevieve from the Rectory, George went out resolutely to the greenhouses at the bottom of the garden. No sight or sound of him should disturb her; and as he went he thanked God earnestly that she was not alone.

Canon Gabriel went into the room where Noel Bartholomew was lying; he went first, leaving Genevieve without the door for a moment or two; then he led her there to the side of the bed; and they knelt together for awhile. Genevieve was calm, but the strength to look on the dead face was not yet hers. She was alone when the strength came.

Though the white curtains were drawn the room was yet filled with light, a soft, reverent, pure white light that helped to beautify everything it fell upon.

The face of Noel Bartholomew needed no

adventitious aid. It was as a sculptor's dream of all that might be grand or great in humanity.

It has been said that it is not till after death that the real character of a man is made visible in the countenance ; not till that low strife which makes the mind little for the moment is over. All that has been best in a man is confirmed, attested ; all that has been less than the best is done away.

When Death has laid "his sovereign, soothing hand" upon the features he leaves there a royal serenity of aspect. It is as if he said, "Though you knew it not, this man was noble, and had a noble power. All that life darkened, I, Death, make visible to your eyes."

Not yet had Genevieve Bartholomew shed any tear. In this first moment she shed none. This seemed no place for tears. Her first thought was, "Is this my father ? Can he look so ? "

For some time she stood there with clasped hands and bowed head, not thinking, not praying, only looking into that still, and calm, and noble face.

The scent of the white violets that were strewn about the pillow, of the great rich spires of white hyacinth that were everywhere, came to her like part of that which filled the room, that grand, great Presence that was yet beautiful, that was wholly peaceful.

Outside in the sunny air the birds were chirping and singing ; that was the only sound, and it was the sound that the sleeping man had loved above all others ; the sound that more than any had made him to be "in love with easeful Death." It was as if she could still hear him saying—

"Now more than ever seems it rich to die,  
To cease upon the midnight with no pain."

Even so he had ceased to be, not upon the dark midnight, but upon the still sunny Sunday morning ; at a time, and in a place where one lower than he might have been moved to desire to cease to be.

It was not till the thought came to her that she might not remain there much longer that any chord of grief was struck. She knelt again then, kneeling so that she could see the face. "Must I leave you, my father ? "

she said, speaking with white, quivering lips. “ Must I leave you, not to see you any more? . . . And you have not spoken to me . . . not once. . . . I want to hear you speak again, my father, but once again.” She spoke softly, and as she spoke, her voice changed; sobs broke it, the slow hot tears began to fall.

For a long time she knelt there; and the passion of weeping had its way, weeping which heals the heart’s bruises in such mysterious ways, and with such effectiveness that the worst grief is never the same again as when it was dry and hard and tearless.

Genevieve’s sorrow had never been hard, there was no hardness in her nature; and this loss was not of a kind to bring hardness. Neither was there fear of any kind; nor any dark dread of the silent land whither her father had gone.

He seemed very near to her as she knelt there. The knowledge that you can put out your hand and touch the face that is so close to yours if you will, is incompatible with the idea that he whom you may touch cannot hear you, or know of your existence.

Is there not always the idea that those who have but just gone cannot yet have gone very far?

Other thoughts came, other questions, other desires, such as may not be written; then at last the moment of parting came. It might have been terrible; but that yearning, aching sadness had no terror in it. The sting of death had been taken away, the victorious grave was as the open gate of heaven.

The day when they laid him in his grave was a grey, quiet, sombre day. The sun did not shine upon it. Nature had no smile that morning; instead she dropped a few quiet tears, and her deep-drawn sighs came shivering downward from the moor, stirring the leafless boughs to a mournful movement that was like a gesture of sympathetic sadness.

Noel Bartholomew's grave had been made by the side of the one that had been made only a few short weeks before. "He will be glad to have it so," Genevieve said when the Canon told her. "And I shall be glad." The affectionate friendship that had been between the two who slept there came back to her with a new significance. Death,

dark death, throws new light upon many things.

When all was over, when the dropping mould had fallen upon the coffin-lid, surely the most agonizing sound this earth can have for human ears, then again sorrow would have her own wild will and way ; and Canon Gabriel was too wise to try to stop the flowing of tears so natural, so certain to end in a more patient peacefulness. For awhile his guest did as she would. If she preferred to be alone he understood without a word ; if she cared to go to him in his study, then she knew that he was glad to have her there. So two days went by in a quiet that was as precious as it was needful.

On the third day there came a sound to break the quiet. The big gates at the bottom of the avenue were thrown open ; a carriage with a pair of horses dashed in rather grandly, and in a very few minutes Canon Gabriel came to prepare Genevieve for a visit.

“Can you see a friend, dear ?” the old man asked. “A friend, who has come a long way to see you. . . . She only got my letter yesterday morning.”

“It is Mrs. Winterford!” Genevieve said, speaking with more of life and eagerness than she had shown about anything yet; and the next moment a little shy, timid, white-haired lady was shown in, her black silk dress rustling, her black beads and fringes glittering and trembling as she rushed forward to be folded in Genevieve’s fervid embrace.

“My child!” she exclaimed, “my own child whom God has given me twice over!” That was all that could be said in that first moment. Tears silenced the words that might have been.

Presently the carriage, which had been hired at Market-Studley, was sent round to the Richmond Arms; and rooms were taken there for Mrs. Winterford and her maid for one night. The little lady meant to do things very quickly, wisely thinking that since they must be painful things, the sooner the pain was overgot the better. She was not long in perceiving that Genevieve had had no plans, and thought of none; so that her own did not meet with prepared opposition. She spoke from the beginning as if no opposition

were possible, or likely; and indeed what opposition could have been made? If Genevieve had thought of the matter at all she would have said to herself, "I have no home, I have no money, and I have no talent that would bring me bread," and so thinking she might for her own convenience, or rather for her life's continuance, have been glad to accept such a home as that open to her at Havilands. Fortunately both for herself and Mrs. Winterford, these thoughts had not come yet. Genevieve only knew that her godmother, who had been very dear to her real mother, was the one friend to whom she could have yielded herself in this complete and passive way. No thought of dependence crossed her mind, because she knew that it could never cross the mind of Mrs. Winterford. True affection, true friendship, knows nothing of benefits conferred or received.

As far as possible Mrs. Winterford made her arrangements with the Canon's aid alone. He was to see Miss Craven, to ask her to take Keturah until another place could be found for her; to pay aught that might be owing; to engage some one to pack up all that had

belonged to Noel Bartholomew and to his daughter, and see that the packages were forwarded to Havilands. The pictures and the furniture of the studio were to be sent to Meyer and Calanson's. The dead artist had mentioned to Canon Gabriel as well as to his daughter, his intention about the disposal of his works.

All this was arranged on that first evening ; and then the Canon disclosed to Mrs. Winterford, as gently as he could, all that he knew of George Kirkoswald's love for Genevieve. That was how he spoke of it ; because that was the side of the matter that he knew most about.

" You do not speak as if the engagement were a definite one ? " Mrs. Winterford said, trying to hide the sudden sinking of heart that the news caused her. " And, indeed, if it had been, I think I should have heard of it."

" I am sure you would have heard of it, " the Canon said. They were sitting together in his book-lined study. The little white-haired lady with her white cap and glistening fringes sat by the fire, looking into the

Canon's worn, gentle, finely-furrowed face, listening to his pure musical voice with appreciation of its music. "I am sure you would have been told at once," he said. "And I think I should have been told too. But there has been pain, and some mistake, some mystery. I only guess its nature, and therefore I may not speak of it. I think it is at an end; but events have come too quickly one after another to permit of any real and open clearing up of things. Now, of course, it is impossible that there can be anything definite said for some time to come."

"You think the affection is mutual?" the little lady asked.

"Of that I am certain," was the reply, and many thoughts were behind the old man's words as he spoke. "I am quite certain that it is mutual; and I am quite certain that on both sides it is very great. Mr. Kirkoswald has been ill, but he is better now; and since Genevieve has been here he has come down from Usselby each morning and each evening to make inquiries. He will come again to-night; and I must see him for

a moment. . . . It will be a painful moment if I must tell him that Genevieve is leaving us to-morrow."

"I think she would not wish to see him just now," Mrs. Winterford said, speaking timidly, as if not quite sure.

"Most certainly she would not," the Canon said decisively. "She probably could not. I have not mentioned his name to her at all. . . . And he is very good, patient with a deep, strong patience that touches me greatly."

\* \* \* \* \*

The events of the past few days had told more considerably upon George Kirkoswald's newly-recovered strength than he was ready to admit; but admission was forced upon him at last. Dr. Armitage, meeting him on his way down from Usselby to the Rectory that same evening, insisted upon his going back again; and the next morning found him, to say the least of it, willing to rest. He would go down to Thirkeld Abbas when evening came again.

It was a very wild evening, wild and cold and strange. All day the sky had been swept by great gloomy masses of cloud; the tem-

perature had gone down rapidly ; the wind had come in fitful gusts. Then it had ceased, and a thick, damp, chilling snow-fog had crept up from the north-east, covering all the land. It hung like a great yellow pall as George went down from Usselby in the late afternoon. He could not see the church tower : the tops of the houses disclosed themselves to him slowly, one by one, as he rode up the village street. He left his horse at the Richmond Arms this evening, which he had not done before. He hardly knew why he did it now. Was there any vague hope in him that Genevieve might see him for a minute or two ? Surely she could trust him not to speak of aught that might not yet be spoken of ! He had just destroyed that letter which he had written ten days ago ; he had put it into the fire without breaking the seal, having the very general feeling that one's own letters are seldom pleasant reading. . . . What unpleasant things time can make of some of them !

So, with a little fluttering about his heart, he went up to the Rectory. If he might but just see her, but just hold her hand, and look

into her eyes for one moment, he would ask no more. There was something that was almost a smile about his mouth as he shook hands with Canon Gabriel ; but the Canon did not respond to that buoyant and rather hopeful glance. Instead he said at once :—

" I have some news that will surprise you, and not agreeably, I am afraid. But sit down. . . . There is nothing very sad about it in one sense."

" It concerns Miss Bartholomew ? Is she ill ? "

" No, I am thankful to say. She seemed better than I had hoped this morning. Fragile as she looks, she is very strong. But it will be better to tell you all at once. Mrs. Winterford, her friend and godmother, came yesterday ; and this morning she went away again, taking Genevieve with her. They have gone direct to Havilands."

For a considerable time, George Kirkoswald made no reply. He sat looking into the fire ; a quick dash of sleety snow came beating with a sudden spitefulness upon the window-pane. The study was growing dark.

“Havilands is near to Dorking, I think ?” he remarked presently.

“Yes, somewhere between Dorking and Leatherhead. It is a very lovely place, I believe.”

“And what is Mrs. Winterford like ?”

“She is like a good, charming, motherly little lady, nearly sixty years of age, I should say,” the Canon replied. “Her love for Genevieve is beautiful to see, it is so tender, so almost deferential, and yet so wise. To have seen her is to find a load gone from my heart. . . . I wish much that you might have seen her too !”

“I shall see her before long,” said George resolutely, rising to his feet as he spoke, and smoothing out the contractions that had gathered about his forehead. He could perceive already that this thing that was causing him such great and unexpected disappointment was the best thing possible for her he loved. Love is worth nothing that cannot acquiesce in the good of the one beloved, even though that good lie outside of him and all his effort, all his cognizance.

Yet it was a lonely going back for him.

He felt that he had never been glad enough that Genevieve had been so near. He could not picture her in that new and unknown home, with that new and unknown friend whose love and opportunities for showing love seemed to defraud him somewhat. He would have to live in the future while the slow days were passing now; but he could not look cheerfully into the days to be with that chill piercing gust coming round him in the darkness, dashing the snow into his face, and half-blinding him. That brief bright February spring which comes so often in this strange climate of ours was at an end. It had given place to that second winter which, as a rule, proves to be a worse winter than the first.

## CHAPTER XXII.

## THE DRIFTING SNOW UPON LANGBARUGH MOOR.

“ Yet turn again, thou faire damselle,  
And greete thy queene from mee  
When bale is at hyest, boote is nyest,  
Now helpe enoughe may bee.”

*The Ballad of Sir Aldingar.*

ALL the year that cry that was for ever upon old Joseph Craven’s lips had no meaning—none but that tragic meaning which was connected with it when it first broke from his lips. Now once more it came mournfully and appositely,—

“ The snaw’s allus driftin’ ower Langbarugh Moor ! ”

For three days it had been drifting. The land lay white and still under a lowering, threatening snow-cloud of dark indigo blue. It is a sky that is indescribable in its effect,

and that effect is heightened by the unbroken whiteness that lies everywhere underneath it. Has any artist ever given us its mysticity, its strange gloom, its ominousness ?

It is, of course, only visible between the showers. When the snow is actually falling there is nothing but the thick whiteness, which is dusky yellow if you look upward, or towards nightfall dusky grey. There is hardly a more mournful time than the twilight that is darkened by thick, fast-falling snow.

It is mournful enough in towns and villages, but if you would know it at its worst you must seek out some lone house on the edge of a Yorkshire Moor, accessible only by bad roads, and some miles distant from the necessities of life. To add to your appreciation of the moment, you should be responsible for the well-being of the household, and your means should be of the narrowest, so as to preclude your having had stores of anything in readiness for such a catastrophe as lies within the meaning of the simple words " snowed up."

Poor Dorothy Craven was feeling as if

every flake was falling upon her heart with anything but snow-like lightness. The winter altogether had been a dark time for her. The bad harvest had proved in the event to be very bad. The downward trend of things had become more marked than ever since the thrashing out of the scant spoiled corn, which had been pronounced to be unfit for human food. Dorothy knew that it was unfit—the black, heavy, moist loaf on her own table was proof enough of that. Even when she had bought a sack of good foreign flour to mix with her own, the product was hardly eatable. Yet Miss Craven eat of it daily, with many a sad and secret wonder as to the ways of an inscrutable Providence.

This was not the worst. Black bread was bad, but unpaid rent was worse ; and now a whole year's rent was owing ; at May-day it would be a year and a half. . . . It was very certain that the coming May would see the end of things at Hunsgarth Haggs.

If a last straw had been needed surely it had come in the shape of this late snow-storm. The few sheep that were left were huddled together in the frozen stackyard,

the cattle were housed, and were feeding on the black, worthless hay. It was no wonder that the little milk that the cows gave was blue and thin, and that it had no cream to speak of. It was only in keeping with all the rest. The very fowls were not laying. For weeks past there had been no farm produce of any kind to be taken to Thurkeld Abbas, to exchange for groceries or for animal food. For over a week now the daily dinner for Miss Craven, her father and mother, and the one farm lad, had consisted mainly of a pigeon or two shot by Hanson as they clustered together on the snow-covered remains of the last haystack.

Mr. Crudas was not unaware of this state of things ; he was mindful to keep himself as much alive to it as was possible. Dorothy told him nothing that she could help telling ; but, as he was in the habit of saying to himself, “ If I *is* a bit deaf, I *isn’t* blind yet ; ” and, indeed, though love may blind the eyes, as it is said to do, assuredly it does but give double seeing power to the heart.

Ishmael Crudas saw a great deal more than he wished to see, and the sight made

his heart ache more than Miss Craven imagined. And she had not permitted him to speak of his heartache of late. Some time ago she had forbidden all protestation. He might come to the house if he chose, or he might choose not to come; but if he came he must be silent about the one wish and desire that was left to him.

He had not been obedient. The thing was always present with him, and it could not be but that it should declare its continued existence in one way or another. If he might not plead openly, he could take care that no chance of inserting a hint was ever lost. He did not mind Dorothy's glances. Another man might have found them deterrent and forbidding, but Mr. Crudas knew her well enough and loved her well enough to dare to brave any number of them. To him they were but a proof that he was not indifferent to her.

He had not been up at Hunsgarth Haggs since the snow-storm set in. The last time Miss Craven had seen him had been in the churchyard at Thurkeld Abbas on the day when Noel Bartholomew had been laid there

to rest. Their eyes had met then through tears and sorrow; and it was but natural that each should see on the face of the other an expression of sympathetic kindness that was not too common there.

That was nearly a week ago. Miss Craven could hardly remember the time when a week had passed without a visit from Ishmael Crudas. She knew well enough that it was not the weather that prevented his coming. Was he ill—lying down there in that wide, lonely house by the sea-cliffs, with no one to tend or care for him? Had he gone from home? Had any accident happened to him?

This was the first time for many years that she had needed to have any anxiety about him, and anxiety seldom does aught toward lessening a woman's affection. Many a love has been first discovered to its possessor in a time of waiting and dread.

And still the dark, wild gusts swept over the moor, laden with the thick drifting snow. The hedges and the low stone walls that were about the farm were not to be discerned. The stillness grew more and more intense;

it was almost appalling. The very blackbird upon the eaves seemed afraid of his own short, plaintive note, and only piped at rare intervals. A half-frozen robin and two starlings went in-doors boldly, and sat in panting silence wherever they were allowed to sit.

And all the while, day by day and hour by hour, old Joseph Craven, walking up and down over the sanded floor, uttered his melancholy burden, varying it, turning it, yet leaving it always the same—

“For ever, for ever, for ever, the white snow drifts upon Langbarugh Moor!”

Dorothy made no attempt to hinder the words that wearied her so. She sat by her mother’s side knitting quickly, almost excitedly, as if the mere mechanical movement of her hands was a necessity of her existence. There was nothing else to be done. She could not see to do anything else. The snow had frozen thickly upon the window-pane, filling the house with gloom; the wind was muttering heavily round the farm; the snow came down the wide chimney, hissing upon the fire as it fell. If there had been no poverty, no lack of aught, no sadness, no

dread, that snowstorm would still have been a wearying and gloomy thing.

The twilight was adding its gloom to the other glooms now, yet Dorothy did not put her knitting away. The clock ticked slowly, the fire burned dimly; her father still walked up and down from the dresser to the door; still kept on uttering the words that seemed filled afresh with sad meanings.

At last, quite suddenly, the old man stopped. He was close to the window.

“ Whisht! ” he said, in a strange, awe-struck whisper. “ Whisht, Dolly! . . . What’s he singin’ for? What’s he singin’ oot there for, where the snaw’s driftin’? It’s allus driftin’ ower Langbarugh Moor! ”

Dorothy Craven was not a weak woman, not impressionable, yet she felt that the colour fled from her face. It was her father’s strange manner that moved her more than aught he said.

“ Who’s singing? ” she said, putting her knitting down, and going up to her father as he stood there in the attitude of one who listens intently.

“ Wheä’s singin’? ” the old man said, with

a smile. “ Whya lissen tiv her ! She pretends she disn’t know Ishmal Crudds’s voice ! . . . Hearken, then ! hearken ! Wheä is’t ‘at sings yon sang ?—

‘ It’s oh, I’m sick, I’m very sick,  
An’ it’s a’ for Barbara Allen.’ ”

For a moment Dorothy felt faint, yet unconsciously she was impelled to listen herself. But she could hear no sound save the sound of the wuthering wind, and the driving snow, and the hissing that was upon the wide hearthstone.

Doubtless this was a new fancy of her father’s weakened brain ; yet she knew that he was not given to new fancies, and there was that in his manner which compelled more than her attention.

“ He’s oot yonder,” the old man went on, with a new keen sparkle in his faded eyes, and a small spot of burning colour coming into either cheek. “ Ishmal’s oot yonder, ower by Haverah Mere. . . . But what’s he singin’ for ?—what sud he staäy there singin’ i’ th’ driftin’ snaw for ; the snaw that drifts for ever upon Langbarugh Moor ? ”

With a quiver on her lip Dorothy went out to the door that opened upon the stack-yard. The snow was falling less heavily; there was a lurid gleam of light up over the edge of the white moorland. But the only sound she heard was the sound of the milk streaming into Hanson's pail in the cow-house close at hand, and the pitiful bleating of the sheep which were huddled together under the stable-wall. The wind was lulled for a moment.

Her father came out to her as she stood there. "Ya can hear him noo, Dorothy? ya can hear him noo?" the old man said excitedly. "He's up yonder, ower by the mere. Ya can hear him singin'. Hearken, then! hearken!"—

"Oh, slowly, slowly, raise she up,  
To the place where he was lyin';  
And when she drew the curtain by,  
'Young man, I think ye're dyin'!'"

Was she dreaming? Was it not impossible that the sound of a man's voice should reach from the road that crossed the moor to Hunsgarth Hagg? The distance was said to be nearer two miles than one. Surely it

was impossible! And yet—yet, if she had ever heard Ishmael Crudas singing

“Be kind to Barbara Allan,”

then assuredly she heard him now.

She did not stop to think. There was an old plaided shawl lying folded on a chair which she threw round her as she went out. “Hanson!” she cried, as she rushed past the open door of the cow-house, “Hanson! follow me!”

And Hanson followed her, out through the stackyard-gate into the deep drift that was lying there in the upland pathway. The snow was harder than it had been, yet they sank at almost every step. Fortunately, the wind was not just then in its gustiest mood, and the snow was only falling lightly, softly, in the gathering twilight. But though things were so favourable, it was a whole long hour before they stood by the edge of the tiny moorland lake known as Haverah Mere.

Dorothy had not spoken, nor had she heard any sound to guide her on her way. That one line of the song that she had heard before she left the house was ringing in her ears still; it had certainly come, as her father

had said, from that quarter of the moor where the mere was; and though it must have come against the wind, the seeming absurdity of her proceeding never struck her.

She had said to herself in the beginning that she would go as far as the mere if that were possible, and now she stood by the edge of the basin that enclosed it on three sides. It was frozen; the snow was lying smoothly upon it, higher at one end than the other apparently, but she could not see quite across to the other side. And yet it was not a dark night. Though it was long past the hour of sunset, and the moon had not yet risen, a light seemed to strike upward from the great unlevel plain of snow.

Hanson was by her side, wondering, breathless, half-angry, wholly chilled. What could be his mistress's motive for such a wild vagary as this? He could only hope from the bottom of his heart that compensation would be made to him in the shape of supper.

Miss Craven had stopped on the northern edge of the mere. There was no sound, no sign. If there had been any footmarks it was too dark to discern them.

Should she cry aloud? Should she make known her presence there, so that, if any wanderer were fallen into that sleep which is the sleep of death he might be roused to effort? Her lips parted to make some sound, but none came. She was nerveless, powerless. If she had had any hope it had lost its spring.

So she stood on the wild, snow-covered moorland. The wind was beginning to rise again: her shawl fluttered past her face. She was growing cold and chill since her purpose had begun to fail.

Then suddenly, as she stood there, a shrill sound broke upon the night; it seemed close at hand in the darkness when it began. Dorothy turned, stifling a sob that arose lest it should prevent her hearing. Whence exactly did it come? It seemed farther away already. She clasped her hands passionately together as she stood with the snow-flakes drifting into her face. In her ears the words were shrilling:—

“She hadna gane a mile but twa  
When she heard the deid-bell ringin’,  
And every jow the deid-bell gied,  
It cried, ‘Wae to Barbara Allan.’”

“Wae, indeed!” she said to herself, as she went flying over the frozen snow. There was no sound now to guide her. For some minutes she went wandering on in the gusty darkness, now stopping for a moment, now stumbling, and rising again and hurrying on. Then, again, there came a sign; again the shrill voice rose on the wind, crying only:—

“Wae to Barbara Allan!”

She reached the spot from whence the sound had come at last. It was no delusion, no false voice sent to lure her to her destruction, as she had imagined more than once it might be. There, in the drifted, trackless snow a man had fallen by the side of a fallen horse, and the man was Ishmael Crudas.

The horse was dead; some seizure had come upon him; and the snows of Langbarugh Moor were making for him a grave.

His master was lying there with his head upon the flank of the dappled-grey that had been to him as a friend. It was doing him service still, being protection from both wind and snow. At the moment when Dorothy Craven reached the spot Ishmael Crudas slept, but his sleep was the sleep that comes

between the delirious moments of high fever.

He awoke to her voice, to her touch, when she dashed away the snow that was gathering about him, but he had no power to rouse himself. If he opened his eyes she could not see, but when he spoke, or rather sang, faintly and out of tune, she heard all too plainly :—

“It’s oh, I’m sick, I’m very, very sick,  
An’ it’s a’ for Barbara Allan.”

“But ‘Barbara Allan’ is here,” Dorothy said. “Or if it is not ‘Barbara Allan,’ it is Dorothy Craven, and I guess one will do as well as the other just now.”

But the prostrate man did not understand. It was some time before he was able to rise to his feet and go. Miss Craven supported him on one side, Hanson on the other; and that weary way from Haverah Mere to Huns-garth Haggs will never be forgotten by any one of those three who travelled over it that wild February night. The moon was up by the time they reached the brow of the moor. It hung like a golden lamp in a fast-changing world of grey and golden cloud. At times it was obscured altogether, and the three went

on less bravely. The clock was striking ten when they entered the kitchen of that lone upland farm.

“ Eh ! but I was reeght then,” the old man said, with a new and beautiful light spreading over his worn face as they went in. “ Eh ! but I was reeght. 'Twas you that was singin' upon Langbarugh Moor, then ! I said you were singin' there, though the snaw was driftin'. . . . T' snaw's allus driftin' ower Langbarugh Moor ! ”

## CHAPTER XXIII.

“FRESH AS THE WILDING HEDGE-ROSE CUP.”

“Thus, 'twas granted me  
To know he loved me to the depth and height  
Of such large natures, ever competent,  
With grand horizons by the sea or land,  
To love's grand sunrise. Small spheres hold small fires,  
But he loved largely, as a man can love  
Who, baffled in his love, dares live his life,  
Accept the ends which God loves, for his own,  
And lift a constant aspect.”

MRS. BROWNING, *Aurora Leigh*.

WILL it not be refreshing to find that the scene has changed with apparent rapidity—that Murk-Marishes with its barren and profitless farms, Langbarugh Moor with its drifting snows, Soulsgrif Bight with its homely fisher-folk, have all had to give place to the summer sunshine of the south, to civilization, to all the softness of a rich pastoral beauty?

The house at Havilands stands in a hollow between wood-crowned hills — round-topped gently-curving hills, disclosing no bare riven crags, no masses of sterile sandstone. It is very truly one of those “places of nestling green for poets made.” For a moment, looking down on a June day into the hollow, you see nothing but that soft, feathery, waving green which makes the beautiful distinctiveness of early summer. Presently you perceive some clusters of twisted Tudor chimneys, then a low red gable, and a little farther on an opening between the trees discloses to you a flower-filled garden, a mossy arbour or two, a great fish-pond, where white and yellow water-lilies float, and where tall amber-tinted irises stand in thick clusters. The sloping banks of the pond are covered with flowers of every hue.

Already George Kirkoswald was beginning to think that he had done an unwise thing in presuming to enter this earthly paradise uninvited and unannounced. Yet the plan had had an irresistible attraction for him beforehand; and when all was said, he was but intending to make a call. Surely any

friend of Miss Bartholomew's might venture to call to see her in the house where she had made her home.

Only a very few days before, Canon Gabriel had dropped a hint which had startled George not too pleasantly. The Canon had received a letter from Mrs. Winterford in which that lady had spoken of the possibility there was of her going to Switzerland for a few weeks, and taking Miss Bartholomew with her. The matter was not settled; but Genevieve was needing change, she said. The girl had begun to droop in unaccountable ways; and nothing would be so certain to revive her as the foreign travel for which she had always longed. Mrs. Winterford would write again when anything definite had been come to.

George had left Usselby the next day; and now he was wandering here, alone, in Mrs. Winterford's garden. He had found a wicket-gate at the farther end of the place; and an old woman, who was evidently supposed to be weeding, had directed him to make his way up to the house between the avenues of flowers that were standing tall, and still, and

beautiful on every side. For a moment or two he had a sense of reminiscence ; and then it occurred to him that it was Noel Bartholomew's lovely garden-scene that was behind the momentary confusion of his brain. The white , graceful Madonna lilies seemed as if they whispered together of the dead artist ; and the rose-sprays moved with little gestures of sadness—or so he fancied, as he stood there in that woven wilderness of emerald green bestarred with all the summer flowers of the land. Accustomed as he had been to the sight of beauty of all kinds, this beauty came to him like a new emotion.

No sound broke the perfect stillness of the place. It was the time of day when birds are mute. A hot sun was pouring down. White fleecy cloudlets were floating up the sky ; butterflies hovered by on silent wing.

George went on wandering slowly up toward the house. There was a little rustic arbour with wreaths of purple clematis dropping over it, and a table with two chairs inside it. On the table there was a piece of embroidered satin, and a tiny work-basket that he knew. He felt his face grow hot as

he stood there; and when he turned away his heart was beating. This nearness, this knowledge was almost enough for the moment.

He went on a little faster, nervously, unconsciously, and a sudden turn brought him to the side of the lakelet where the water-lilies were floating among the great, cool green leaves; and the flags standing straight, and still, and double, being reflected downward as clearly as they stood upward. He had not seen before that there was an islet in the middle of the water, all covered with flowering shrubs and trailing branches, and rosy dropping blossoms. What was that gleaming line of blue and white half-hidden among the scarlet honeysuckle? Surely it was a little boat. . . . He went onward. The boat was drifting slowly; the oars dropped upon the rowlocks; the crimson cushions pillow'd a golden head half-hidden by a straw hat with a black ribbon on it; a white shawl was thrown over a heavy black dress. . . . It was Genevieve, and she slept. . . . The boat drifted onward toward an outlet that the water had at the farther end of the tiny lake. It

was moving slowly, very slowly, brushing the yellow irises and the dropping woodbine. Still it moved : still Genevieve slept.

George had time to think a thousand things as he sauntered as noiselessly as might be over the turf-covered pathway ; turning now and then that he might keep near the drifting boat. There was a hedge of flowers between him and the lakelet, sometimes a tall hedge, sometimes a low one ; but he never lost sight of the golden head that lay sleeping upon the crimson cushions.

He remembered distinctly the moment when that fair, pure, impressive face had first struck upon his sight. The storm-wind of Soulsgrif Bight was playing rudely with the yellow rippling tresses ; the deep violet-grey eyes were lifted to his in anxious pain, the curved coral lips were parted to ask for any word of hope that he might have to give. . . . Surely it was but yesterday !

All that storm scene came back upon him —the dragging of the lifeboat overland, through the snow ; the difficulty of launching it from the sands of Soulsgrif ; the disabling stroke, the return, the second and successful

attempt to save the lives of the crew of the *Viking*. But the one scene that came more vividly than all the rest, was the tall, white figure standing out against the black rock, just above the wild, mad rushing of the yeasty waves. And as he thought of it again, he felt the thrill that went through him as he held Genevieve Bartholomew for one perilous moment in his arms—perilous and precious, and to be remembered for evermore.

And as he walked on there came to him the memory of that second time when his arm had enfolded her. Then also there had been peril, and pain, and dark fear below the rapture of the moment.

Surely if there had been aught ominous about those days the omen had spent itself now. Love's way had never run smoothly since. But this was no time for looking back, and looking sadly. The very air about him, the stir and scent of the flowers, the sparkling of the glassy water; all these things were against one thought of doubt, or fear, or sadness.

And still the enchanted boat went on over the enchanted lake. It was near the lower

end now, where a great elm-tree overshadowed the water: and where the white chalices of the lilies were more thickly clustered together. The little craft went on; there was a slight shudder when the keel caught a great tangled root, and then the golden head was raised; the face that was as a wild June rose was lifted in wonder. . . . Surely she had not been sleeping!

Genevieve stooped for her hat which had fallen to the bottom of the boat, and the next moment she turned suddenly. There was something moving among the rose-bushes—some one was there!

“ Can I help you to land ? ” asked a clear, penetrating voice that seemed as if it were subdued by the softness of the beauty that was everywhere. A tall, dark figure stood by the elm-tree bole; a little cry answered him; quick, hot blushes poured like a tide over the face that was so near his. George’s hand was already on the bow of the boat drawing it into a tiny green and golden creek. There was no doubt about anything, no hesitation. Genevieve gave him both her hands with a look of unutterable tenderness, and

sweetness, and rapture. Then she stepped from the boat, and only knew that once more she was folded close to a heart that was beating as wildly and as warmly as her own. . . . No words were said—there was no need of aught so poor and inadequate as words.

That one supreme hour of life, the hour to which the poet turns in his fullest ecstasy of mystic singing, was theirs ; though it passed by, it would be theirs for evermore.

Such hours are typical ; and attest the higher element in man—his capacity for exaltation above himself. To have attained to this height and dignity of loving, is to have known the glory of human transfiguration.

You may step down from that height into the every-day life of humanity on earth, but you shall take with you as an abiding possession, the insight and the gain of that hour of measureless grace.

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Mrs. Winterford was in London that day : she had gone there on business, and she had declined to take Genevieve into the heat and dust of the crowded city on a hot day in June.

The little lady was too well-bred to show the surprise she felt when she returned in the evening, and met her daughter in the chestnut avenue leaning on the arm of a tall, dark, distinguished-looking stranger.

“Mr. Kirkoswald, I am sure,” she said, accepting his assistance as she stepped from her carriage. Then she gave him her hand, looking into his face with a look that he could not but feel to be critical. Happy as he was that was a nervous moment.

Mrs. Winterford was not a woman to permit the stranger within her gates to feel strange for any length of time if she could help it; and she usually did help it. She had a quiet way of settling things, or rather of seeming to accept them as already settled. The great news of the day was all understood without a word.

“I cannot talk of it,” she said, sitting down in her pretty drawing-room to have a cup of tea before she went to dress for dinner. She was speaking more particularly to George Kirkoswald. “You will understand that though I am so glad, it is half a pain. I mean to be very good, but you will let me be

good in my own way ; and I fear my way will be a very silent way so far as this is concerned. I am glad from the bottom of my heart, but I cannot hide the fact that I am also very sorrowful."

George had already arranged to stay for a few days at the station hotel half a mile distant, where he had left his luggage. He would have gone back to dress for dinner ; but this Mrs. Winterford would not permit. There was no one but Genevieve and herself ; and though the little lady was somewhat ceremonious, she knew how to excuse ceremony with perfect grace at the right moment.

That evening, and many subsequent evenings, George dined at Havilands, and it hardly need be said that he found his way to the garden that nestled in the green hollow at hours when there was no question of dinner. Those days went by in such a passionate peace as he had never known, such as Genevieve had never dreamed.

If the memory of him who was not came there at times, making "one and one with a shadowy third," the remembrance had no pain save the pain of separation. "I have learnt,"

Genevieve said, “to feel almost glad for him, that he is at rest. Everything beautiful and peaceful speaks to me of him ; and I seem to know that he is near. It is only at times now that I have that terrible aching because I cannot see him, or hear him speak as he used to speak. He was so brave, so patient, and it made me feel patient only to be with him.”

“And now you will have to help to make me brave,” George said. They were walking down by the side of the still waters. The flowers were sleeping in the late twilight, the tops of the tall trees stirred against the deep blue of the summer evening sky. “I believe that is the secret of half my love for you,” he said, raising the white hand he held to his lips as he spoke. “The yearning I have always had to live a higher life seemed to become more than a mere yearning from the day I met you. I suppose one ought to be capable of living up to one’s best alone ; but there are minds which need the warmth of human contact, and mine is one of them. Since I have known you, such good as may be in me has been a different thing—a more

vital thing, with more practical desires, and keener insight into human needs. I see more clearly now how certainly, and how pitifully—

‘The world waits  
For help. Beloved, let us love so well  
Our work shall still be better for our love,  
And still our love be sweeter for our work,  
And both commended, for the sake of each,  
By all true workers and true lovers born !’”

## EPILOGUE.

“No cloud across the sun  
But passes at the last, and gives us back  
The face of God once more.”

CHARLES KINGSLEY, *The Saint's Tragedy*.

Not that summer, but the summer that came after, when the heather of Langbarugh Moor was just turning to purple, the master and mistress of Usselby came back from sunnier lands to their own home by the North Sea. All the neighbourhood was glad to know of their coming.

Is it forgotten, all that ethical and æsthetical discussion of long ago? Mrs. Kirkoswald had not forgotten; she took it up where Genevieve Bartholomew had left it off; being moved to new remonstrance by the beauty of the home which her husband had prepared for her during the previous spring while she was abroad with Mrs. Winterford. He had

to point out to her how simple its charms were ; to lament over the many things he might have done but for that wholesome fear which had been laid upon him.

“ Here are chintz curtains, where silk or plush should have been,” he said, “ and English carpets where I would have preferred carpets from Turkey or Persia ; and there is not an inch of gilding about the place.”

“ Because you know that gilding has gone out of fashion,” said Genevieve, not disposed to allow her husband to be too triumphant over such self-denials as were visible here. But not even for the sake of keeping up the pleasantry of disapproval would she refuse to admit her complete delight with the true taste which had been displayed. The wide drawing-room with windows looking out over the sea had been entirely refurnished. Soft pale tints were blended together so that no colour seemed to prevail, but yielded a general harmony of tones that was as pleasant as a piece of good subdued music. There was a new grand piano of exquisite touch and tone. The walls were half-covered with her father’s water-colour drawings beautifully framed.

“How did you get these?” Genevieve asked, laying her hand gently on her husband’s arm, and speaking in a voice that was not free from tremulousness.

“I bought them at the sale, little one.”

“You were there, at that sale? . . . And you have never told me?”

“I thought it better not to tell you, not till now,” George said, putting his arm round her tenderly as if to shield her from any pain there might be in going back over the past.

And in a sense it was certainly painful. As soon as Bartholomew’s death had become known there had gathered instantly about his name and work that buzz and babel of idle praise which, when it has been denied while the life was being lived and the work done, is almost as much a disgrace to the living as it is an insult to the dead. This had been Bartholomew’s own view of a state of things which he had anticipated for himself. “It will be with me as it was with Millet and Méryon and scores of others,” he said, and his prophecy had been fulfilled to the letter.

He would hardly have been surprised if he

ould have known that his beautiful CEnone, for which in his more sanguine moments he had expected to get five hundred pounds, had risen in value by his death till it was considered to be worth three thousand. That was the sum paid down for it at Messrs. Meyer and Calanson's.

It was the same with the Judas. Genevieve did not know what price her father had expected to get for this picture; but he had certainly not expected to receive the sum of two thousand two hundred and fifty pounds.

Everything else that had been sent to the sale, the merest sketches, nay, the very sweepings of the studio, had been bought in the same reckless and uncomprehending manner. The sketch for the Good Samaritan, done in the two days preceding Bartholomew's death, sold for a sum that would have done more than cover the expenses of the household at Netherbank during all those days of hardship, and distress of mind, and actual want. It could not be that Genevieve should hear of this, and not weep as she heard it.

She remained silent till they had passed on into another room ; then she looked up, and her husband saw that she was smiling through her tears.

“ Then I have some money of my own now ? ” she asked.

“ You have a very respectable sum of your own,” replied George. “ What is your instant intention to do with it ? ”

“ I shall give a grand entertainment in Soulsgrif Bight the day after to-morrow.”

“ Very well, dear ; then I will leave you to make out your list of guests, and compose a programme.”

“ You must certainly not leave me ; I shall want all the help you can give.”

The feast was not made that week, but it was made at the end of the week following ; and the poor and the rich were called together in a way which had become quite fashionable in the neighbourhood of Murk-Marishes since the building of the music-room. Mrs. Winterford, who was staying at the Hall, went down with Mr. and Mrs. Kirkoswald, the latter dressed in a pretty white dress and a straw hat with white wild roses on it.

Canon Gabriel came, the beautiful smile playing more sweetly than ever about his fine worn face, and lighting up the patient, pathetic, spiritual eyes. And it need hardly be said that Mr. and Mrs. Crudas had received a special invitation. They came over from Swarthcliff Top in the newest and neatest little dogcart that was ever driven down a steep cliff-side. Dorothy was looking radiant in her wedding-dress of lilac silk; and a pretty bonnet to match.

“She isn’t leuk a daäy mair nor five and thirty,” said Mr. Crudas, speaking to Mrs. Kirkoswald. “Ah declare there’s times when Ah feel shamed o’ goin’ aboot wiv a young-lookin’ wife like that at my aäge. Never mind. Ah’s a good bit off sixty yet; an’ they tell me Jacob was seventy when he began to wait them fourteen years for Rachel.”

Mr. Crudas was not an uncommunicative man, but he never told the world what wild errand had led him over Langbarugh Moor in the middle of a heavy snowstorm. Three days before, when the storm was only just beginning, he had ridden over the moor to

Gorthwaite station and had left his horse there while he took the train and went on to York. He had no business at York save the transfer of a cheque for the sum of two hundred pounds. The cheque was made out in the name of a friendly banker's clerk, and it was enclosed in a letter addressed by the same obliging young man to Miss Dorothy Craven, and left to be posted five days later, so that there might be no suspicion. A little note was enclosed intimating that the cheque was "conscience money."

Returning to Gorthwaite, he had stayed there two of the five days, fearing much that his continued absence would reach the ears of Miss Craven. On the third day he set out, choosing to run some risk of being lost in the snow rather than run the risk of failing to help the woman he loved in a strait so desperate as hers was then.

But though he has never disclosed his errand, he is to this day fond of telling the story of how he was lost and how he was found in a snow-storm on the heights of Langbarugh Moor. His experience had certainly been peculiar. After the stage of

suffering and misery, and darkness was over, a whole world of pleasant dreams and hallucinations had taken possession of his brain. He had seemed to enter into warm, brilliantly lighted, and richly furnished houses ; to see the tables loaded with glittering glass and silver, and tempting food and wine. He had seemed to himself to be hot and thirsty, and rich fruits of all colours and all kinds had been placed before him, piled in profusion on dishes of sparkling crystal ; but he had not been allowed to touch the fruit. When he put out his hand it was drawn away. It was the same with the other food and the wines ; he might only see them there. He had no recollection of any face or voice, nor had he any remembrance of having raised his own voice to sing “ *Barbara Allan.* ” . . . Now Mr. Crudas sings “ *Barbara Allan* ” no more, and he says he is looking out for a song to take the place of it.

Poor Ailsie Drewe was there when the people gathered that they might be glad together, and so the better remember their gladness. Ailsie went about smiling gently, uncomprehendingly. Of late she had dis-

played a strong liking for Mrs. Gordon, and she had no greater pleasure now than to knit fine woollen stockings for her and for her son. Wilfrid Stuart was charged long ago to see that the poor woman had no care nor any pain that could be averted. . . . She still walks up and down over the rocks in the Bight, still looks out for her little Davy, expecting to see him as she saw him in her dream, far out upon the waters of a wide and shining sea.

Most of the people there were known to Mr. and Mrs. Kirkoswald, but a few new faces were in the crowd. There were the new people who had come to Hunsgarth Haggs, and the carpenter who had taken the cottage at Netherbank, and had restored the studio to its original use. He has a young wife, and a wee girl who can trot along the corn-fields and stand at the stile to watch for the pretty lady who rides by with her husband, and who manages somehow to hide a pocket for sweets in the folds of her habit.

Mrs. Caton, Mrs. Damer, the Pencefolds, Miss Standen, indeed the *élite* of Thirkeld Abbas generally, went down to Soulsgrif

Bight on the day of rejoicing. The entertainment was very much of the nature of a picnic, and luncheon was served out of doors in a green sheltered spot between the cliffs beyond the music-room. The local band played its loudest, ladies fluttered about in dresses of the gayest fashion, the blue sea was at its bluest, and a soft cool wind came off the water, tempering the heat of the August sun. Perhaps there was no greener, fresher, happier spot that day in England than the bight under the tall cliffs of Soulsgrif.

Keturah was there—proud of being under-housemaid at Usselby, and Jael and old Charlock were among the guests. These two had just retired to a cottage at Thurkeld Abbas, and were not sorry to retire. They were old now, both of them, and it was not to be expected of them that they should put up with the new-fangled ways of the new servants who had come to Usselby. They live rent-free in a cottage with a garden large enough to require all the thought and strength that old Ben can give.

More than once as the day went Genevieve

found herself looking out toward the turn of the road where once before she had so unexpectedly seen Miss Richmond's carriage descending. It was just possible that Diana might come down to-day, and Mrs. Kirkoswald half hoped that she might. They had met once—one day when there was quite a little crowd in the drawing-room at Usselby, and Genevieve had seen at a glance the change that had come over the face and the ways of the proud, imperious, changeful woman, who had always been so puzzling and so bewildering, and who yet had had power to compel at least a strong interest in herself. The thing she had compelled she was able to win now. The wistful and pathetic sadness on her face lent to it an altogether new beauty. It was hardly possible to see that look of intense loneliness, of hidden pain and regret, and not desire to pass beyond the conventionalities that condemn people to the superficial intercourse which has value neither for him who gives nor for him who receives.

In answer to Genevieve's invitation for to-day Miss Richmond had written a brief note,

asking if she might leave the matter undecided. She would have been glad to go, yet she dreaded going ; and when the day came her dread was greater than her desire. "They may forgive," she said to herself; "they may even forget, but I cannot—I would not if I could forget. . . . If, as George Kirkoswald says, there is any hope for me, it can only come by ceaselessly remembering."

Genevieve was sorry, the first time she went to Yarrell, to find that Miss Richmond was not at home. "She had gone up to the moor," Kindle said ; and George Kirkoswald and his wife went home by another way.

Is this the end of any history touched upon here ? All lives have a history, and it does not need effective incident to make a true human story interesting. How very interesting any tale is that is told simply and openly, and not by parables ! But it is expedient that the truth should be veiled at times. We throw a veil over the very life we are living, as over a statue or a picture that is not completed. It is Death who comes and gives the finishing touches, and leaves the completed

work all rounded, and seemly, and intelligible.

At Usselby Hall it is well understood that life has only just begun. The time to understand this fully is acknowledged always to be the present time, and just now that is the month of May. The very birds comprehend it—the thrush and the blackbird, the chaffinch, and the warbling willow wren. And the trees attest it—the golden sycamore that shines in the morning sun like the burning bush on Mount Horeb, the fringed and tasselled larches, the alder with its soft display of tiny flowers and downward-dropping leaves. The fruit trees flush to crimson for the coming gladness of the land, and yet again the wild flowers dance in the green meadows where the lark drops suddenly down to a restful hidden silence, like a poet seeking seclusion while the world praises his latest song.

“This is the kind of morning to feel one’s life in all its fulness,” George Kirkoswald says. He is walking up and down the terrace in front of the house, and he is speaking to his wife who is by his side. She is wearing

a white morning dress, her golden hair catches the sunshine, her dark beautiful eyes are full of life's gladness and holiness.

“Yes,” she replies; “I have just been wondering over the fulness of life, wondering if the next two and twenty years could possibly be so full of experience as the two and twenty that are gone. I feel rather like the philosopher—was it Mr. Mill?—who grieved lest it should some day be discovered that there could be no new combinations of musical sound.”

“I do not know enough of music to be able to set a philosopher's fears to rest on that point,” George answers, “but I do know something of human life; and I know that life, if it be lived with any truth and earnestness, can never fail to present to him who lives it, enough of freshness and vitality to make it worth living. If a man would live fully, he must live deeply. It seems to me that the fault of the day is the fear of going below the surface. The upheaval will come from below, and it will come before long if oil be not poured upon the troubled waters presently. Even in these remote districts the

consciousness of dissatisfied, I may almost say outraged humanity, is awakening. And we are altogether blind, blind and deaf. It is neither our money nor our lands that the people desire. The majority of the suffering poor would recoil from the idea of taking by violence the things that justly belong to others. It is not our possessions that they crave : it is our due sympathy, our thought for their welfare, our good-will, our care for their lives, our human and Christian loving-kindness. Had we but ever so faintly apprehended that Sermon on the Mount, there had not been that dread among Christian nations which is rising and gathering now. . . . If we can bring but a stone to repair the ancient pathways in God's name let us bring it. So we shall find our life here, and even so we may trust its Hereafter."

THE END.

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